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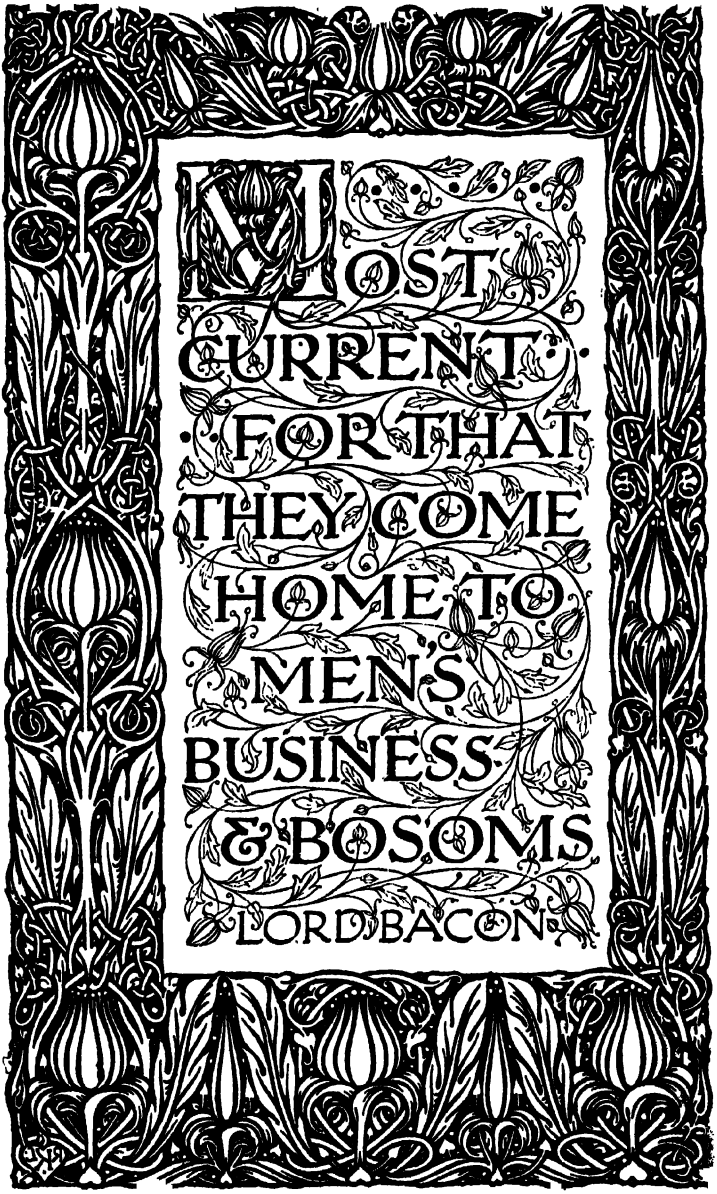
COLERIDGE'S LECTURES ON SHAKSPEARE AND OTHER POETS AND DRAMATISTS

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IN TWO STYLES OF BINDING, CLOTH FLAT BACK COLOURED TOP AND LEATHER ROUND CORNERS GILT TOP.

LONDON: J. M. DENT & CO.


MOST CURRENT FOR THAT THEY COME HOME TO MEN'S BUSINESS & BOSOMS
LORD BACON

COLERIDGE'S ESSAYS & LECTURES on SHAKSPEARE & Some Other OLD POETS & DRAMATISTS

LONDON: PUBLISHED
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PRINTED BY
TURNBULL AND SPEARS,
EDINBURGH

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

IN treating of Shakspeare, said one of the best of Coleridge's critics, "he set the sun in heaven." The present volume, imperfect record as it is, contains the greater substance of all that the most inspired English critic said, whether casually or deliberately, of the most inspired poet. Its contents are those of the two posthumous miscellanies of notes for lectures and reports of lectures, which were prepared by Henry Nelson Coleridge and his wife Coleridge's daughter, Sarah—in 1836, and by Payne Collier in 1856. The first deals principally with the lectures given by Coleridge in 1818, but it contains many notes and memoranda which belong equally to the earlier period. And one suspects Payne Collier's contribution of the 1811-12 lectures, although he was a less unreliable recorder than is usually supposed, to have been in some instances from the earlier publication. Perhaps the best way to read in this double collection is to turn up first the Notes upon Shakspeare's plays—"Hamlet" for preference, in which Coleridge (who was himself an intellectual Hamlet) used to perfection the subtle mirror afforded by his own mind; and then from that to work through the maze of his lectures and poetic homilies. It must be remembered that the whole book, as here constituted, is the tell-tale memorial of the Coleridge who was too indolent to make good his harvest. He had a magnificent intellect, a superb imagination, but no corresponding will-power. The consequence is that his lectures on Shakspeare were imperfectly prepared, often ill-delivered, and left in the end to the mercy of careless reporters. But to those who can discern the god in the cloud, these transcripts are of inestimable value. Intermittent flashes of creative criticism break continually through the misty envelope, and the brilliance is according to the assimilative or the refractive quality of the reader. For, as Coleridge quotes and says, "we are not all Mogul diamonds, to take the light." There are readers that are

sponges, and others that are sand-glasses or strain-bags, who let the creative element escape, and retain only the dregs. There are plentiful dregs in these pages.

A page ought to be added to enable us the better to realise Coleridge, the lecturer, as he appeared to his hearers and contemporaries.

Byron, in one of his letters, says: "We are going in a party to hear the new Art of Poetry by the reformed schismatic."[1] This was toward the end of the course, which according to Crabb Robinson ended with *éclat*. "The room was crowded, and the lecture had several passages more than brilliant." This was after a very fluctuating success. At a December lecture, ostensibly on Romeo and Juliet, he is said to have "surpassed himself in the art of talking in a very interesting way without speaking at all on the subject announced." On the same occasion Charles Lamb whispered to his neighbour in the audience: "This is not much amiss. He promised a lecture on the Nurse in Romeo and Juliet, and he has given us instead one in the *manner* of the nurse." Four times in all were his hearers invited to a lecture on Romeo and Juliet, it seems; and at least three times did he disappoint them. Instead of the expected discourse, "We have," said Crabb Robinson in a letter to Mrs Clarkson, "an immethodical rhapsody. . . . Yet I cannot but be charmed with their *splendida vitia*, and my chief displeasure is occasioned by my being forced to hear the strictures of persons infinitely below Coleridge, without any power of refuting or contradicting them."

For this course of 1811-12, Coleridge did not write out his lectures, and they were nearly all delivered extemporaneously. The Morgans, with whom he was staying at the time, found it hard to get him to make any direct preparation. He would not look into his Shakspeare, although they purposely put it in his way, and an old MS. commonplace book seems to have been his sole remembrancer.

For the course of 1818, he did, on his own declaration, make a more settled preparation, on an eclectic plan of his own.

"During a course of lectures," he writes, "I faithfully employ all the intervening days in collecting and digesting the materials. The day of the lecture I devote to the consideration, what of the

[1] Crabb Robinson speaks of seeing Byron and Rogers at one of the lectures of this course. He says of Bryon: "He was wrapped up, but I recognised his club foot, and indeed his countenance and general appearance."

mass before me is best fitted to answer the purpose of a lecture, that is, to keep the audience awake and interested during the delivery, and to leave a sting behind," that is, he explains, a wish to study the subject anew, in the light of a new principle. "I take far, far more pains," he adds, "than would go to the set composition of a lecture, both by varied reading and by meditation; but for the words, illustrations, etc., I know almost as little as any one of the audience . . . what they will be five minutes before the lecture begins."

The 1811-12 lectures were delivered in rooms in Crane Court, Fetter Lane, Fleet Street. The 1818 course was held in rooms at Flower-de-Luce Court—"near the Temple," Gilman says; but no doubt the Fleur-de-lis Court, off Fetter Lane, is the actual place. Coleridge, it is well to note, gave some earlier courses of lectures in London; one in 1806-7, at the Royal Institution, was "On the Principles of the Fine Arts"; and in 1807-8, he actually began five courses of five lectures each on the English poets, of which only the first course, that on Shakspeare, was delivered. But this first course, and its date, are important, because of the old question of Coleridge's debt to Schlegel. Schlegel's lectures were given in 1808, as Mr. Ashe points out in this connection (in his interesting edition of Coleridge's Lectures which was published in 1883). Coleridge himself speaks of one London detached lecture of his, at the "Crown and Anchor," whose date was probably 1817 or 1818.

Other lectures were given in 1813 at the Surrey Institution, on Belles Lettres; and in Bristol, at the great room of the "White Lion," in 1813-14. After some characteristic delays and disappointments, these Bristol lectures gave immense pleasure to the few elect who went to them. Cottle describes them as of a conversational character, and says, "The attention of his hearers never flagged, and his large dark eyes, and his countenance, in an excited state, glowing with intellect, predisposed his audience in his favour." We gather from other references that they did not bring him much gold, greatly as he and his unlucky family needed it. The London course of 1818 ends his career as a lecturer; and if it was a rather more profitable adventure, it was hardly one to reinstate his poor fortunes. He was then a man of forty-six. In 1834 he died.

THE FOLLOWING IS A LIST OF HIS PUBLISHED WORKS

Greek Prize Ode on the Slave Trade, Cambridge, 1792. *Monody on the Death of Chatterton* (first draft), 1794. *The Fall of Robespierre: An Historic Drama* (Coleridge and Southey), 1794. Contributions to *The Cambridge Intelligencer* and *The Morning Chronicle*, 1794-1795. *The Watchman*, 1796. *Poems on Various Subjects*, 1796. *The Vision of the Maid of Orleans* (Southey's *Joan of Arc*), republished as *The Destiny of Nations*, 1796. *Ode on the Departing Year*, 1796. Contributions to *The Monthly Magazine*, 1796-1797. *Fears in Solitude; France, an Ode; Frost at Midnight*, 1798. *Lyrical Ballads*, 1798 (containing "The Ancient Mariner" and other poems). Contributions to *The Morning Post*, 1798-1802. *Poems in Annual Anthology*, 1799-1800. *Wallenstein* (from the German of Schiller), 1800. Contributions in Prose and Verse to *The Courier*, 1807-1811. *The Friend*, 1 June, 1809, to 15 March, 1810. Contributions to Southey's *Omniana*, 1812. *Remorse*, 1813 (remodelled from *Osorio*, written in 1797; pub. 1873). *Essays on the Fine Arts* (Felix Farley's *Bristol Journal*, 1814). *Christabel; Kubla Khan; Pains of Sleep*, 1816 (first and second parts of *Christabel*, written 1797 and 1800). *The Statesman's Manual; or, The Bible the Best Guide to Political Skill and Foresight*, 1816. *Sibylline Leaves*, 1817. *Zapolya: A Christmas Tale*, 1817. *Biographia Literaria*, 1817. *On Method* (Essay forming the General Introduction to *Encyclopædia Metropolitana*, 1817-1818). Contributions to *Blackwood's Magazine*, 1819-1822. *Aids to Reflection*, 1825. *On the Constitution of the Church and State*, 1830.

A Moral and Political Lecture, 1795. *Conciones ad Populam; or, Addresses to the People*, 1795. *The Plot Discovered: An Address to the People*, 1795.

First Collected Edition of Poems and Dramas, 1828.

POSTHUMOUS WORKS

Specimens of his Table Talk (Edited by H. N. Coleridge), 1835. *Letters, Conversations, and Recollections of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* (Edited by T. Allsop), 1836, 58, 64. *Literary Remains* (Edited by H. N. Coleridge), 1836-1839. *Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit* (Edited by H. N. Coleridge), 1840. *Hints towards the Formation of a more Comprehensive Theory of Life* (Edited by S. B. Watson), 1848. *Notes and Lectures upon Shakspeare and some of the Old Dramatists* (Edited by

Sara Coleridge), 1849. *Essays on his own Times* (Edited by S. Coleridge), 3 vols., 1850. *Notes upon English Divines* (Edited by Derwent Coleridge), 1853. *Notes: Theological, Political, and Miscellaneous* (Edited by D. Coleridge), 1853. *Lectures on Shakespeare*, from Notes by J. P. Collier, 1856. *Poetical and Dramatic Works*, founded on the Author's latest edition of 1834 (Edited by R. H. Shepherd), 4 vols., London and Boston, 1877-1881. *Complete Works* (Edited by Professor Shedd), 1884. *Miscellanies: Æsthetic and Literary* (Edited by T. Ashe), 1885. *The Poetical Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* (Edited by James Dyke Campbell), 1893. *Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, 1785-1834 (Edited by E. H. Coleridge), 2 vols., 1895.

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To

JOSEPH HENRY GREEN, Esq.

MEMBER OF THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS

THE APPROVED FRIEND

OF COLERIDGE

THESE VOLUMES ARE GRATEFULLY INSCRIBED

PREFACE

TO THE 1836 EDITION OF 'LITERARY REMAINS'

MR. COLERIDGE by his will, dated in September, 1829, authorized his executor, if he should think it expedient, to publish any of the notes or writing made by him (Mr. C.) in his books, or any other of his manuscripts or writings, or any letters which should thereafter be collected from, or supplied by, his friends or correspondents. Agreeably to this authority, an arrangement was made, under the superintendence of Mr. Green, for the collection of Coleridge's literary remains; and at the same time the preparation for the press of such part of the materials as should consist of criticism and general literature, was entrusted to the care of the present Editor. The volumes now offered to the public are the first results of that arrangement. They must in any case stand in need of much indulgence from the ingenuous reader;—*multa sunt condonanda in opere postumo;* but a short statement of the difficulties attending the compilation may serve to explain some apparent anomalies, and to preclude some unnecessary censure.

The materials were fragmentary in the extreme—Sibylline leaves;—notes of the lecturer, memoranda of the investigator, out-pourings of the solitary and self-communing student. The fear of the press was not in

them. Numerous as they were, too, they came to light, or were communicated, at different times, before and after the printing was commenced; and the dates, the occasions, and the references, in most instances remained to be discovered or conjectured. To give to such materials method and continuity, as far as might be,—to set them forth in the least disadvantageous manner which the circumstances would permit,—was a delicate and perplexing task; and the Editor is painfully sensible that he could bring few qualifications for the undertaking, but such as were involved in a many years' intercourse with the author himself, a patient study of his writings, a reverential admiration of his genius, and an affectionate desire to help in extending its beneficial influence.

The contents of these volumes are drawn from a portion only of the manuscripts entrusted to the Editor: the remainder of the collection, which, under favourable circumstances, he hopes may hereafter see the light, is at least of equal value with what is now presented to the reader as a sample. In perusing the following pages, the reader will, in a few instances, meet with disquisitions of a transcendental character, which, as a general rule, have been avoided: the truth is, that they were sometimes found so indissolubly intertwined with the more popular matter which preceded and followed, as to make separation impracticable. There are very many to whom no apology will be necessary in this respect; and the Editor only adverts to it for the purpose of obviating, as far as may be, the possible complaint of the more general reader. But there is another point to which, taught by past experience, he attaches more importance, and as to which, therefore, he ventures to put in a more express

and particular caution. In many of the books and papers, which have been used in the compilation of these volumes, passages from other writers, noted down by Mr. Coleridge as in some way remarkable, were mixed up with his own comments on such passages, or with his reflections on other subjects, in a manner very embarrassing to the eye of a third person undertaking to select the original matter, after the lapse of several years. The Editor need not say that he has not knowingly admitted any thing that was not genuine, without an express declaration as in Vol. I. p. 1 ;[1] and in another instance, Vol. II. p. 379,[2] he has intimated his own suspicion ; but, besides these, it is possible that some cases of mistake in this respect may have occurred. There may be one or two passages—they cannot well be more—printed in these volumes, which belong to other writers ; and if such there be, the Editor can only plead in excuse, that the work has been prepared by him amidst many distractions, and hope that, in this instance at least, no ungenerous use will be made of such a circumstance to the disadvantage of the author, and that persons of greater reading or more retentive memories than the Editor, who may discover any such passages, will do him the favour to communicate the fact.

To those who have been kind enough to communicate books and manuscripts for the purpose of the present publication, the Editor and, through him, Mr. Coleridge's executor return their grateful thanks. In most cases a specific acknowledgment has been made. But, above and independently of all others, it is to Mr. and Mrs.

[1] The Editor is here speaking of his note to *the Fall of Robespierre*, published in the former Vol. i. of the *Literary Remains*, shewing that the second and third acts were by Mr. Southey.

[2] This reference is to his remark on an extract from Crashaw's *Hymn to the name of Jesus*, printed in Vol. ii. of the *Lit. Rem.* as first published.

Gillman, and to Mr. Green himself, that the public are indebted for the preservation and use of the principal part of the contents of these volumes. The claims of those respected individuals on the gratitude of the friends and admirers of Coleridge and his works are already well known, and in due season those claims will receive additional confirmation.

With these remarks, sincerely conscious of his own inadequate execution of the task assigned to him, yet confident withal of the general worth of the contents of the following pages—the Editor commits the reliques of a great man to the indulgent consideration of the Public.

Lincoln's Inn,
August 11, 1836.

LITERARY REMAINS

Extract from a Letter written by Mr. Coleridge, in February, 1818, to a gentleman who attended the course of Lectures given in the spring of that year.

My next Friday's lecture will, if I do not grossly flatter-blind myself, be interesting, and the points of view not only original, but new to the audience. I make this distinction, because sixteen or rather seventeen years ago, I delivered eighteen lectures on Shakspeare, at the Royal Institution; three-fourths of which appeared at that time startling paradoxes, although they have since been adopted even by men, who then made use of them as proofs of my flighty and paradoxical turn of mind; all to prove that Shakspeare's judgment was, if possible, still more wonderful than his genius; or rather, that the contradistinction itself between judgment and genius rested on an utterly false theory. This, and its proofs and grounds have been—I should not have said adopted, but produced as their own legitimate children by some, and by others the merit of them attributed to a foreign writer, whose lectures were not given orally till two years after mine, rather than to their countryman; though I dare appeal to the most adequate judges, as Sir George Beaumont, the Bishop of Durham, Mr. Sotheby, and afterwards to Mr. Rogers and Lord Byron, whether there is one single principle in Schlegel's work (which is not an admitted drawback from its merits), that was not established and applied in detail by me. Plutarch tells us, that egotism is a venial fault in the unfortunate, and justifiable in the calumniated, &c.

* * * * * * *

Extract from a Letter to J. Briton, Esq.

28th Feb., 1819, Highgate.

DEAR SIR,—First permit me to remove a very natural, indeed almost inevitable, mistake, relative to my lectures: namely, that I *have* them, or that the lectures of one place or season are in any way repeated in another. So far from it, that on any point that I had ever studied (and on no other should I dare discourse—I mean, that I would not lecture on any subject for which I had to *acquire* the main knowledge, even though a month's or three months' previous time were allowed me; on no subject that had not employed my thoughts for a large portion of my life since earliest manhood, free of all outward and particular purpose)—on any point within my habit of thought, I should greatly prefer a subject I had never lectured on, to one which I had repeatedly given; and those who have attended me for any two seasons successively will bear witness, that the lecture given at the London Philosophical Society, on the *Romeo and Juliet*, for instance, was as different from that given at the Crown and Anchor, as if they had been by two individuals who, without any communication with each other, had only mastered the same principles of philosophic criticism. This was most strikingly evidenced in the coincidence between my lectures and those of Schlegel; such, and so close, that it was fortunate for my moral reputation that I had not only from five to seven hundred ear witnesses that the passages had been given by me at the Royal Institution two years before Schlegel commenced his lectures at Vienna, but that notes had been taken of these by several men and ladies of high rank. The fact is this; during a course of lectures, I faithfully employ all the intervening days in collecting and digesting the materials, whether I have or have not lectured on the same subject before, making no difference. The day of the lecture, till the hour of commencement, I devote to the consideration, what of the mass before me is best fitted to answer the purposes of a lecture, that is, to keep the audience awake and interested during the delivery, and to leave a sting behind, that is, a disposition to study the subject anew, under

the light of a new principle. Several times, however, partly from apprehension respecting my health and animal spirits, partly from the wish to possess copies that might afterwards be marketable among the publishers, I have previously written the lecture; but before I had proceeded twenty minutes, I have been obliged to push the MS. away, and give the subject a new turn. Nay, this was so notorious, that many of my auditors used to threaten me, when they saw any number of written papers upon my desk, to steal them away; declaring they never felt so secure of a good lecture as when they perceived that I had not a single scrap of writing before me. I take far, far more pains than would go to the set composition of a lecture, both by varied reading and by meditation; but for the words, illustrations, &c., I know almost as little as any one of the audience (that is, those of any thing like the same education with myself) what they will be five minutes before the lecture begins. Such is my way, for such is my nature; and in attempting any other, I should only torment myself in order to disappoint my auditors—torment myself during the delivery, I mean; for in all other respects it would be a much shorter and easier task to deliver them from writing. I am anxious to preclude any semblance of affectation; and have therefore troubled you with this lengthy preface before I have the hardihood to assure you, that you might as well ask me what my dreams were in the year 1814, as what my course of lectures was at the Surrey Institution. *Fuimus Troes.*

SHAKSPEARE,

With introductory matter on Poetry, the Drama, and the Stage.

DEFINITION OF POETRY.

POETRY is not the proper antithesis to prose, but to science. Poetry is opposed to science, and prose to metre. The proper and immediate object of science is the acquirement, or communication, of truth; the proper and immediate object of poetry is the com-

munication of immediate pleasure. This definition is useful; but as it would include novels and other works of fiction, which yet we do not call poems, there must be some additional character by which poetry is not only divided from opposites, but likewise distinguished from disparate, though similar, modes of composition. Now how is this to be effected? In animated prose, the beauties of nature, and the passions and accidents of human nature, are often expressed in that natural language which the contemplation of them would suggest to a pure and benevolent mind; yet still neither we nor the writers call such a work a poem, though no work could deserve that name which did not include all this, together with something else. What is this? It is that pleasurable emotion, that peculiar state and degree of excitement, which arises in the poet himself in the act of composition;—and in order to understand this, we must combine a more than ordinary sympathy with the objects, emotions, or incidents contemplated by the poet, consequent on a more than common sensibility, with a more than ordinary activity of the mind in respect of the fancy and the imagination. Hence is produced a more vivid reflection of the truths of nature and of the human heart, united with a constant activity modifying and correcting these truths by that sort of pleasurable emotion, which the exertion of all our faculties gives in a certain degree; but which can only be felt in perfection under the full play of those powers of mind, which are spontaneous rather than voluntary, and in which the effort required bears no proportion to the activity enjoyed. This is the state which permits the production of a highly pleasurable whole, of which each part shall also communicate for itself a distinct and conscious pleasure; and hence arises the definition, which I trust is now intelligible, that poetry, or rather a poem, is a species of composition, opposed to science, as having intellectual pleasure for its object, and as attaining its end by the use of language natural to us in a state of excitement,—but distinguished from other species of composition, not excluded by the former criterion, by permitting a pleasure from the whole consistent with a consciousness of pleasure from the component parts;—and the perfection of which

is, to communicate from each part the greatest immediate pleasure compatible with the largest sum of pleasure on the whole. This, of course, will vary with the different modes of poetry;—and that splendour of particular lines, which would be worthy of admiration in an impassioned elegy, or a short indignant satire, would be a blemish and proof of vile taste in a tragedy or an epic poem.

It is remarkable, by the way, that Milton in three incidental words has implied all which for the purposes of more distinct apprehension, which at first must be slow-paced in order to be distinct, I have endeavoured to develope in a precise and strictly adequate definition. Speaking of poetry, he says, as in a parenthesis, "which is simple, sensuous, passionate." How awful is the power of words!—fearful often in their consequences when merely felt, not understood; but most awful when both felt and understood!—Had these three words only been properly understood by, and present in the minds of, general readers, not only almost a library of false poetry would have been either precluded or still-born, but, what is of more consequence, works truly excellent and capable of enlarging the understanding, warming and purifying the heart, and placing in the centre of the whole being the germs of noble and manlike actions, would have been the common diet of the intellect instead. For the first condition, simplicity,—while, on the one hand, it distinguishes poetry from the arduous processes of science, labouring towards an end not yet arrived at, and supposes a smooth and finished road, on which the reader is to walk onward easily, with streams murmuring by his side, and trees and flowers and human dwellings to make his journey as delightful as the object of it is desirable, instead of having to toil with the pioneers and painfully make the road on which others are to travel,—precludes, on the other hand, every affectation and morbid peculiarity;—the second condition, sensuousness, insures that framework of objectivity, that definiteness and articulation of imagery, and that modification of the images themselves, without which poetry becomes flattened into mere didactics of practice, or evaporated into a hazy, unthoughtful, day-dreaming; and the third condition, passion, provides that

neither thought nor imagery shall be simply objective, but that the *passio vera* of humanity shall warm and animate both.

To return, however, to the previous definition, this most general and distinctive character of a poem originates in the poetic genius itself; and though it comprises whatever can with any propriety be called a poem (unless that word be a mere lazy synonyme for a composition in metre,) it yet becomes a just, and not merely discriminative, but full and adequate, definition of poetry in its highest and most peculiar sense, only so far as the distinction still results from the poetic genius, which sustains and modifies the emotions, thoughts, and vivid representations of the poem by the energy without effort of the poet's own mind,—by the spontaneous activity of his imagination and fancy, and by whatever else with these reveals itself in the balancing and reconciling of opposite or discordant qualities, sameness with difference, a sense of novelty and freshness with old or customary objects, a more than usual state of emotion with more than usual order, self-possession and judgment with enthusiasm and vehement feeling,—and which, while it blends and harmonizes the natural and the artificial, still subordinates art to nature, the manner to the matter, and our admiration of the poet to our sympathy with the images, passions, characters, and incidents of the poem :—

> Doubtless, this could not be, but that she turns
> Bodies to *spirit* by sublimation strange,
> As fire converts to fire the things it burns—
> As we our food into our nature change !
>
> From their gross matter she abstracts *their* forms,
> And draws a kind of quintessence from things,
> Which to her proper nature she transforms
> To bear them light on her celestial wings !
>
> *Thus* doth she, when from *individual states*
> She doth abstract the universal kinds,
> *Which then reclothed in divers names and fates*
> *Steal access thro' our senses to our minds.*[1]

[1] Sir John Davies on the Immortality of the Soul, sect. iv. The words and lines in italics are substituted to apply these verses to the poetic genius. The greater part of this latter paragraph may be found adopted, with some alterations, in the *Biographia Literaria*, vol. ii. c. 14; but I have thought it better in this instance and some

GREEK DRAMA.

It is truly singular that Plato,—whose philosophy and religion were but exotic at home, and a mere opposition to the finite in all things, genuine prophet and anticipator as he was of the Protestant Christian æra,—should have given in his Dialogue of the Banquet, a justification of our Shakspeare. For he relates that, when all the other guests had either dispersed or fallen asleep, Socrates only, together with Aristophanes and Agathon, remained awake, and that, while he continued to drink with them out of a large goblet, he compelled them, though most reluctantly, to admit that it was the business of one and the same genius to excel in tragic and comic poetry, or that the tragic poet ought, at the same time, to contain within himself the powers of comedy.[1] Now, as this was directly repugnant to the entire theory of the ancient critics, and contrary to all their experience, it is evident that Plato must have fixed the eye of his contemplation on the innermost essentials of the drama, abstracted from the forms of age or country. In another passage he even adds the reason, namely, that opposites illustrate each other's nature, and in their struggle draw forth the strength of the combatants, and display the conqueror as sovereign even on the territories of the rival power.

Nothing can more forcibly exemplify the separative spirit of the Greek arts than their comedy as opposed to their tragedy. But as the immediate struggle of contraries supposes an arena common to both, so both were alike ideal; that is, the comedy of Aristophanes rose to as great a distance above the ludicrous of real life, as the tragedy of Sophocles above its tragic events and passions,—and it is in this one point, of absolute

others, to run the chance of bringing a few passages twice over to the recollection of the reader, than to weaken the force of the original argument by breaking the connection. *Ed.*

[1] —— *ἐξεγρόμενος δὲ ἰδεῖν τοὺς μὲν ἄλλους καθεύδοντας καὶ οἰχομένους, Ἀγάθωνα δὲ καὶ Ἀριστοφάνην καὶ Σωκράτη ἔτι μόνους ἐγρηγορέναι, καὶ πίνειν ἐκ φιάλης μεγάλης ἐπιδεξιά. τὸν οὖν Σωκράτη αὐτοῖς διαλέγεσθαι· καὶ τὰ μὲν ἄλλα ὁ Ἀριστόδημος οὐκ ἔφη μεμνῆσθαι τὸν λόγον· (οὔτε γὰρ ἐξ ἀρχῆς παραγενέσθαι, ὑπονυστάζειν τε) τὸ μέντοι κεφάλαιον ἔφη, προσαναγκάζειν τὸν Σωκράτη ὁμολογεῖν αὐτοὺς τοῦ αὐτοῦ ἀνδρὸς εἶναι κωμῳδίαν καὶ τραγωδίαν ἐπίστασθαι ποιεῖν, καὶ τὸν τέχνῃ τραγῳδοποιὸν ὄντα, καὶ κωμῳδοποιὸν εἶναι.* Symp. sub fine.

ideality, that the comedy of Shakspeare and the old comedy of Athens coincide. In this also alone did the Greek tragedy and comedy unite; in every thing else they were exactly opposed to each other. Tragedy is poetry in its deepest earnest; comedy is poetry in unlimited jest. Earnestness consists in the direction and convergence of all the powers of the soul to one aim, and in the voluntary restraint of its activity in consequence; the opposite, therefore, lies in the apparent abandonment of all definite aim or end, and in the removal of all bounds in the exercise of the mind,—attaining its real end, as an entire contrast, most perfectly, the greater the display is of intellectual wealth squandered in the wantonness of sport without an object, and the more abundant the life and vivacity in the creations of the arbitrary will.

The later comedy, even where it was really comic, was doubtless likewise more comic, the more free it appeared from any fixed aim. Misunderstandings of intention, fruitless struggles of absurd passion, contradictions of temper, and laughable situations there were; but still the form of the representation itself was serious; it proceeded as much according to settled laws, and used as much the same means of art, though to a different purpose, as the regular tragedy itself. But in the old comedy the very form itself is whimsical; the whole work is one great jest, comprehending a world of jests within it, among which each maintains its own place without seeming to concern itself as to the relation in which it may stand to its fellows. In short, in Sophocles, the constitution of tragedy is monarchical, but such as it existed in elder Greece, limited by laws, and therefore the more venerable,—all the parts adapting and submitting themselves to the majesty of the heroic sceptre: —in Aristophanes, comedy, on the contrary, is poetry in its most democratic form, and it is a fundamental principle with it, rather to risk all the confusion of anarchy, than to destroy the independence and privileges of its individual constituents,—place, verse, characters, even single thoughts, conceits, and allusions, each turning on the pivot of its own free will.

The tragic poet idealizes his characters by giving to the spiritual part of our nature a more decided prepon-

derance over the animal cravings and impulses, than is met with in real life: the comic poet idealizes his characters by making the animal the governing power, and the intellectual the mere instrument. But as tragedy is not a collection of virtues and perfections, but takes care only that the vices and imperfections shall spring from the passions, errors, and prejudices which arise out of the soul;—so neither is comedy a mere crowd of vices and follies, but whatever qualities it represents, even though they are in a certain sense amiable, it still displays them as having their origin in some dependence on our lower nature, accompanied with a defect in true freedom of spirit and self-subsistence, and subject to that unconnection by contradictions of the inward being, to which all folly is owing.

The ideal of earnest poetry consists in the union and harmonious melting down, and fusion of the sensual into the spiritual,—of man as an animal into man as a power of reason and self-government. And this we have represented to us most clearly in the plastic art, or statuary; where the perfection of outward form is a symbol of the perfection of an inward idea; where the body is wholly penetrated by the soul, and spiritualized even to a state of glory, and like a transparent substance, the matter, in its own nature darkness, becomes altogether a vehicle and fixture of light, a means of developing its beauties, and unfolding its wealth of various colours without disturbing its unity, or causing a division of the parts. The sportive ideal, on the contrary, consists in the perfect harmony and concord of the higher nature with the animal, as with its ruling principle and its acknowledged regent. The understanding and practical reason are represented as the willing slaves of the senses and appetites, and of the passions arising out of them. Hence we may admit the appropriateness to the old comedy, as a work of defined art, of allusions and descriptions, which morality can never justify, and, only with reference to the author himself, and only as being the effect or rather the cause of the circumstances in which he wrote, can consent even to palliate.

The old comedy rose to its perfection in Aristophanes, and in him also it died with the freedom of Greece. Then arose a species of drama, more fitly called, dramatic

entertainment than comedy, but of which, nevertheless, our modern comedy (Shakspeare's altogether excepted) is the genuine descendant. Euripides had already brought tragedy lower down and by many steps nearer to the real world than his predecessors had ever done, and the passionate admiration which Menander and Philemon expressed for him, and their open avowals that he was their great master, entitle us to consider their dramas as of a middle species, between tragedy and comedy,—not the tragi-comedy, or thing of heterogeneous parts, but a complete whole, founded on principles of its own. Throughout we find the drama of Menander distinguishing itself from tragedy, but not, as the genuine old comedy, contrasting with, and opposing it. Tragedy, indeed, carried the thoughts into the mythologic world, in order to raise the emotions, the fears, and the hopes, which convince the inmost heart that their final cause is not to be discovered in the limits of mere mortal life, and force us into a presentiment, however dim, of a state in which those struggles of inward free will with outward necessity, which form the true subject of the tragedian, shall be reconciled and solved;—the entertainment or new comedy, on the other hand, remained within the circle of experience. Instead of the tragic destiny, it introduced the power of chance; even in the few fragments of Menander and Philemon now remaining to us, we find many exclamations and reflections concerning chance and fortune, as in the tragic poets concerning destiny. In tragedy, the moral law, either as obeyed or violated, above all consequences—its own maintenance or violation constituting the most important of all consequences—forms the ground; the new comedy, and our modern comedy in general, (Shakspeare excepted as before) lies in prudence or imprudence, enlightened or misled self-love. The whole moral system of the entertainment exactly like that of fable, consists in rules of prudence, with an exquisite conciseness, and at the same time an exhaustive fulness of sense. An old critic said that tragedy was the flight or elevation of life, comedy (that of Menander) its arrangement or ordonnance.

Add to these features a portrait-like truth of character, —not so far indeed as that a *bona fide* individual should be described or imagined, but yet so that the features

which give interest and permanence to the class should be individualized. The old tragedy moved in an ideal world,—the old comedy in a fantastic world. As the entertainment, or new comedy, restrained the creative activity both of the fancy and the imagination, it indemnified the understanding in appealing to the judgment for the probability of the scenes represented. The ancients themselves acknowledged the new comedy as an exact copy of real life. The grammarian, Aristophanes, somewhat affectedly exclaimed :—" O Life and Menander ! which of you two imitated the other ? " In short the form of this species of drama was poetry, the stuff or matter was prose. It was prose rendered delightful by the blandishments and measured motions of the muse. Yet even this was not universal. The mimes of Sophron, so passionately admired by Plato, were written in prose, and were scenes out of real life conducted in dialogue. The exquisite Feast of Adonis (Συρακούσιαι ἢ Ἀδωνιάζουσαι) in Theocritus, we are told, with some others of his eclogues, were close imitations of certain mimes of Sophron —free translations of the prose into hexameters.

It will not be improper, in this place, to make a few remarks on the remarkable character and functions of the chorus in the Greek tragic drama.

The chorus entered from below, close by the orchestra, and there, pacing to and fro during the choral odes, performed their solemn measured dance. In the centre of the *orchestra*, directly over against the middle of the *scene*, there stood an elevation with steps in the shape of a large altar, as high as the boards of the *logeion* or moveable stage. This elevation was named the *thymele*, (θυμέλη) and served to recall the origin and original purpose of the chorus, as an altar-song in honour of the presiding deity. Here, and on these steps the persons of the chorus sate collectively, when they were not singing ; attending to the dialogue as spectators, and acting as (what in truth they were) the ideal representatives of the real audience, and of the poet himself in his own character, assuming the supposed impressions made by the drama, in order to direct and rule them. But when the chorus itself formed part of the dialogue, then the leader of the band, the foreman or *coryphæus*, ascended, as some think, the level summit of the *thymele* in order

to command the stage, or, perhaps, the whole chorus advanced to the front of the orchestra, and thus put themselves in ideal connection, as it were, with the *dramatis personæ* there acting. This *thymele* was in the centre of the whole edifice, all the measurements were calculated, and the semicircle of the amphitheatre was drawn, from this point. It had a double use, a twofold purpose; it constantly reminded the spectators of the origin of tragedy as a religious service, and declared itself as the ideal representative of the audience by having its place exactly in the point, to which all the radii from the different seats or benches converged.

In this double character, as constituent parts, and yet at the same time as spectators, of the drama, the chorus could not but tend to enforce the unity of place; —not on the score of any supposed improbability, which the understanding or common sense might detect in a change of place;—but because the senses themselves put it out of the power of any imagination to conceive a place coming to, and going away from the persons, instead of the persons changing their place. Yet there are instances, in which, during the silence of the chorus, the poets have hazarded this by a change in that part of the scenery which represented the more distant objects to the eye of the spectator—a demonstrative proof, that this alternately extolled and ridiculed unity (as ignorantly ridiculed as extolled) was grounded on no essential principle of reason, but arose out of circumstances which the poet could not remove, and therefore took up into the form of the drama, and co-organised it with all the other parts into a living whole.

The Greek tragedy may rather be compared to our serious opera than to the tragedies of Shakspeare; nevertheless, the difference is far greater than the likeness. In the opera all is subordinated to the music, the dresses and the scenery;—the poetry is a mere vehicle for articulation, and as little pleasure is lost by ignorance of the Italian language, so is little gained by the knowledge of it. But in the Greek drama all was but as instruments and accessaries to the poetry; and hence we should form a better notion of the choral music from the solemn hymns and psalms of austere church music than from any species of theatrical singing. A single flute or pipe

was the ordinary accompaniment; and it is not to be supposed, that any display of musical power was allowed to obscure the distinct hearing of the words. On the contrary, the evident purpose was to render the words more audible, and to secure by the elevations and pauses greater facility of understanding the poetry. For the choral songs are, and ever must have been, the most difficult part of the tragedy; there occur in them the most involved verbal compounds, the newest expressions, the boldest images, the most recondite allusions. Is it credible that the poets would, one and all, have been thus prodigal of the stores of art and genius, if they had known that in the representation the whole must have been lost to the audience,—at a time too, when the means of after publication were so difficult and expensive, and the copies of their works so slowly and narrowly circulated?

The masks also must be considered—their vast variety and admirable workmanship. Of this we retain proof by the marble masks which represented them; but to this in the real mask we must add the thinness of the substance and the exquisite fitting on to the head of the actor; so that not only were the very eyes painted with a single opening left for the pupil of the actor's eye, but in some instances, even the iris itself was painted, when the colour was a known characteristic of the divine or heroic personage represented.

Finally, I will note down those fundamental characteristics which contradistinguish the ancient literature from the modern generally, but which more especially appear in prominence in the tragic drama. The ancient was allied to statuary, the modern refers to painting. In the first there is a predominance of rhythm and melody, in the second of harmony and counterpoint. The Greeks idolized the finite, and therefore were the masters of all grace, elegance, proportion, fancy, dignity, majesty—of whatever, in short, is capable of being definitely conveyed by defined forms or thoughts: the moderns revere the infinite, and affect the indefinite as a vehicle of the infinite;—hence their passions, their obscure hopes and fears, their wandering through the unknown, their grander moral feelings, their more august conception of man as man, their future rather than their past—in a word, their sublimity.

PROGRESS OF THE DRAMA.

LET two persons join in the same scheme to ridicule a third, and either take advantage of, or invent, some story for that purpose, and mimicry will have already produced a sort of rude comedy. It becomes an inviting treat to the populace, and gains an additional zest and burlesque by following the already established plan of tragedy; and the first man of genius who seizes the idea, and reduces it into form,—into a work of art,—by metre and music, is the Aristophanes of the country.

How just this account is will appear from the fact that in the first or old comedy of the Athenians, most of the *dramatis personæ* were living characters introduced under their own names; and no doubt, their ordinary dress, manner, person and voice were closely mimicked. In less favourable states of society, as that of England in the middle ages, the beginnings of comedy would be constantly taking place from the mimics and satirical minstrels; but from want of fixed abode, popular government, and the successive attendance of the same auditors, it would still remain in embryo. I shall, perhaps, have occasion to observe that this remark is not without importance in explaining the essential differences of the modern and ancient theatres.

Phenomena, similar to those which accompanied the origin of tragedy and comedy among the Greeks, would take place among the Romans much more slowly, and the drama would, in any case, have much longer remained in its first irregular form from the character of the people, their continual engagements in wars of conquest, the nature of their government, and their rapidly increasing empire. But, however this might have been, the conquest of Greece precluded both the process and the necessity of it; and the Roman stage at once presented imitations or translations of the Greek drama. This continued till the perfect establishment of Christianity. Some attempts, indeed, were made to adapt the persons of Scriptural or ecclesiastical history to the drama; and sacred plays, it is probable, were not unknown in Constantinople under the emperors of the East. The first of the kind is, I believe, the only one preserved,—

namely, the Χριστὸς Πάσχων, or, "Christ in his sufferings," by Gregory Nazianzen,—possibly written in consequence of the prohibition of profane literature to the Christians by the apostate Julian.[1] In the West, however, the enslaved and debauched Roman world became too barbarous for any theatrical exhibitions more refined than those of pageants and chariot-races; while the spirit of Christianity, which in its most corrupt form still breathed general humanity, whenever controversies of faith were not concerned, had done away the cruel combats of the gladiators, and the loss of the distant provinces prevented the possibility of exhibiting the engagements of wild beasts.

I pass, therefore, at once to the feudal ages which soon succeeded, confining my observation to this country; though, indeed, the same remark with very few alterations will apply to all the other states, into which the great empire was broken. Ages of darkness succeeded;—not, indeed, the darkness of Russia or of the barbarous lands unconquered by Rome; for from the time of Honorius to the destruction of Constantinople and the consequent introduction of ancient literature into Europe, there was a continued succession of individual intellects;—the golden chain was never wholly broken, though the connecting links were often of baser metal. A dark cloud, like another sky, covered the entire cope of heaven,—but in this place it thinned away, and white stains of light showed a half eclipsed star behind it,—in that place it was rent asunder, and a star passed across the opening in all its brightness, and then vanished. Such stars exhibited themselves only; surrounding objects did not partake of their light. There were deep wells of knowledge, but no fertilizing rills and rivulets. For the drama, society was altogether a state of chaos, out of which it was, for a while at least, to proceed anew, as if there had been none before it. And yet it is not undelightful to contemplate the deduction of good from evil. The ignorance of the great mass of our countrymen was the efficient cause of the reproduction of the drama; and the preceding darkness and the returning light were alike necessary in order to the creation of a Shakspeare.

[1] A.D. 363. But I believe the prevailing opinion amongst scholars now is, that the Χριστὸς Πάσχων is not genuine. *Ed.*

The drama re-commenced in England, as it first began in Greece, in religion. The people were not able to read,—the priesthood were unwilling that they should read; and yet their own interest compelled them not to leave the people wholly ignorant of the great events of sacred history. They did that, therefore, by scenic representations, which in after ages it has been attempted to do in Roman Catholic countries by pictures. They presented Mysteries, and often at great expense; and reliques of this system still remain in the south of Europe, and indeed throughout Italy, where at Christmas the convents and the great nobles rival each other in the scenic representation of the birth of Christ and its circumstances. I heard two instances mentioned to me at different times, one in Sicily and the other in Rome, of noble devotees, the ruin of whose fortunes was said to have commenced in the extravagant expense which had been incurred in presenting the *præsepe* or manger. But these Mysteries, in order to answer their design, must not only be instructive, but entertaining: and as, when they became so, the people began to take pleasure in acting them themselves—in interloping,—(against which the priests seem to have fought hard and yet in vain) the most ludicrous images were mixed with the most awful personations; and whatever the subject might be, however sublime, however pathetic, yet the Vice and the Devil, who are the genuine antecessors of Harlequin and the Clown, were necessary component parts. I have myself a piece of this kind, which I transcribed a few years ago at Helmstadt, in Germany, on the education of Eve's children, in which after the fall and repentance of Adam, the offended Maker, as in proof of his reconciliation, condescends to visit them, and to catechise the children,—who with a noble contempt of chronology are all brought together from Abel to Noah. The good children say the ten Commandments, the Belief and the Lord's Prayer; but Cain and his rout, after he had received a box on the ear for not taking off his hat, and afterwards offering his left hand, is prompted by the devil so to blunder in the Lord's Prayer as to reverse the petitions and say it backward![1]

[1] See vol. i. p. 76, where this is told more at length and attributed to Hans Sachs. *Ed.* Vol. ii. pp. 16, 17, 2nd edit. S. C.

Unaffectedly I declare I feel pain at repetitions like these, however innocent. As historical documents they are valuable; but I am sensible that what I can read with my eye with perfect innocence, I cannot without inward fear and misgivings pronounce with my tongue.

Let me, however, be acquitted of presumption if I say that I cannot agree with Mr. Malone, that our ancestors did not perceive the ludicrous in these things, or that they paid no separate attention to the serious and comic parts. Indeed his own statement contradicts it. For what purpose should the Vice leap upon the Devil's back and belabour him, but to produce this separate attention? The people laughed heartily, no doubt. Nor can I conceive any meaning attached to the words "separate attention," that is not fully answered by one part of an exhibition exciting seriousness or pity, and the other raising mirth and loud laughter. That they felt no impiety in the affair is most true. For it is the very essence of that system of Christian polytheism, which in all its essentials is now fully as gross in Spain, in Sicily and the south of Italy, as it ever was in England in the days of Henry VI.—(nay, more so, for a Wicliffe had not then appeared only, but scattered the good seed widely,) it is an essential part, I say, of that system to draw the mind wholly from its own inward whispers and quiet discriminations, and to habituate the conscience to pronounce sentence in every case according to the established verdicts of the church and the casuists. I have looked through volume after volume of the most approved casuists,—and still I find disquisitions whether this or that act is right, and under what circumstances, to a minuteness that makes reasoning ridiculous, and of a callous and unnatural immodesty, to which none but a monk could harden himself, who has been stripped of all the tender charities of life, yet is goaded on to make war against them by the unsubdued hauntings of our meaner nature, even as dogs are said to get the *hydrophobia* from excessive thirst. I fully believe that our ancestors laughed as heartily, as their posterity do at Grimaldi;—and not having been told that they would be punished for laughing, they thought it very innocent;—and if their priest had left out murder in the catalogue of their prohibitions (as indeed they did under

certain circumstances of heresy), the greater part of them, —the moral instincts common to all men having been smothered and kept from development,—would have thought as little of murder.

However this may be, the necessity of at once instructing and gratifying the people produced the great distinction between the Greek and the English theatres ;—for to this we must attribute the origin of tragi-comedy, or a representation of human events more lively, nearer the truth, and permitting a larger field of moral instruction, a more ample exhibition of the recesses of the human heart, under all the trials and circumstances that most concern us, than was known or guessed at by Æschylus, Sophocles, or Euripides ;—and at the same time we learn to account for, and—relatively to the author—perceive the necessity of, the Fool or Clown or both, as the substitutes of the Vice and the Devil, which our ancestors had been so accustomed to see in every exhibition of the stage, that they could not feel any performance perfect without them. Even to this day in Italy, every opera—(even Metastasio obeyed the claim throughout)—must have six characters, generally two pairs of cross lovers, a tyrant and a confidant, or a father and two confidants, themselves lovers ;—and when a new opera appears, it is the universal fashion to ask—which is the tyrant, which the lover ? &c.

It is the especial honour of Christianity, that in its worst and most corrupted form it cannot wholly separate itself from morality ;—whereas the other religions in their best form (I do not include Mohammedanism, which is only an anomalous corruption of Christianity, like Swedenborgianism,) have no connection with it. The very impersonation of moral evil under the name of Vice, facilitated all other impersonations ; and hence we see that the Mysteries were succeeded by Moralities, or dialogues and plots of allegorical personages. Again, some character in real history had become so famous, so proverbial, as Nero for instance, that they were introduced instead of the moral quality, for which they were so noted ;—and in this manner the stage was moving on to the absolute production of heroic and comic real characters, when the restoration of literature, followed by the ever-blessed Reformation, let in upon the kingdom not only new knowledge, but new motive. A useful rivalry commenced between the metropolis on the

one hand, the residence, independently of the court and nobles, of the most active and stirring spirits who had not been regularly educated, or who, from mischance or otherwise, had forsaken the beaten track of preferment,—and the universities on the other. The latter prided themselves on their closer approximation to the ancient rules and ancient regularity—taking the theatre of Greece, or rather its dim reflection, the rhetorical tragedies of the poet Seneca, as a perfect ideal, without any critical collation of the times, origin, or circumstances;—whilst, in the mean time, the popular writers, who could not and would not abandon what they had found to delight their countrymen sincerely, and not merely from inquiries first put to the recollection of rules, and answered in the affirmative, as if it had been an arithmetical sum, did yet borrow from the scholars whatever they advantageously could, consistently with their own peculiar means of pleasing.

And here let me pause for a moment's contemplation of this interesting subject.

We call, for we see and feel, the swan and the dove both transcendantly beautiful. As absurd as it would be to institute a comparison between their separate claims to beauty from any abstract rule common to both, without reference to the life and being of the animals themselves,—or as if, having first seen the dove, we abstracted its outlines, gave them a false generalization, called them the principles or ideal of bird-beauty, and then proceeded to criticise the swan or the eagle;—not less absurd is it to pass judgment on the works of a poet on the mere ground that they have been called by the same class-name with the works of other poets in other times and circumstances, or on any ground, indeed, save that of their inappropriateness to their own end and being, their want of significance, as symbols or physiognomy.

O! few have there been among critics, who have followed with the eye of the imagination the imperishable yet ever wandering spirit of poetry through its various metempsychoses, and consequent metamorphoses;—or who have rejoiced in the light of clear perception at beholding with each new birth, with each rare *avatar*, the human race frame to itself a new body, by assimilating materials of nourishment out of its new circum-

stances, and work for itself new organs of power appropriate to the new sphere of its motion and activity!

I have before spoken of the Romance, or the language formed out of the decayed Roman and the Northern tongues; and comparing it with the Latin, we find it less perfect in simplicity and relation—the privileges of a language formed by the mere attraction of homogeneous parts;—but yet more rich, more expressive and various, as one formed by more obscure affinities out of a chaos of apparently heterogeneous atoms. As more than a metaphor,—as an analogy of this, I have named the true genuine modern poetry the romantic; and the works of Shakspeare are romantic poetry revealing itself in the drama. If the tragedies of Sophocles are in the strict sense of the word tragedies, and the comedies of Aristophanes comedies, we must emancipate ourselves from a false association arising from misapplied names, and find a new word for the plays of Shakspeare. For they are, in the ancient sense, neither tragedies nor comedies, nor both in one,—but a different *genus*, diverse in kind, and not merely different in degree. They may be called romantic dramas, or dramatic romances.

A deviation from the simple forms and unities of the ancient stage is an essential principle, and, of course, an appropriate excellence, of the romantic drama. For these unities were to a great extent the natural form of that which in its elements was homogeneous, and the representation of which was addressed pre-eminently to the outward senses;—and though the fable, the language and the characters appealed to the reason rather than to the mere understanding, inasmuch as they supposed an ideal state rather than referred to an existing reality, —yet it was a reason which was obliged to accommodate itself to the senses, and so far became a sort of more elevated understanding. On the other hand, the romantic poetry — the Shakspearian drama — appealed to the imagination rather than to the senses, and to the reason as contemplating our inward nature, and the workings of the passions in their most retired recesses. But the reason, as reason, is independent of time and space; it has nothing to do with them: and hence the certainties of reason have been called eternal truths. As for example —the endless properties of the circle:—what connection

have they with this or that age, with this or that country? —The reason is aloof from time and space; the imagination is an arbitrary controller over both;—and if only the poet have such power of exciting our internal emotions as to make us present to the scene in imagination chiefly, he acquires the right and privilege of using time and space as they exist in imagination, and obedient only to the laws by which the imagination itself acts. These laws it will be my object and aim to point out as the examples occur, which illustrate them. But here let me remark what can never be too often reflected on by all who would intelligently study the works either of the Athenian dramatists, or of Shakspeare, that the very essence of the former consists in the sternest separation of the diverse in kind and the disparate in the degree, whilst the latter delights in interlacing, by a rainbow-like transfusion of hues, the one with the other.

And here it will be necessary to say a few words on the stage and on stage-illusion.

A theatre, in the widest sense of the word, is the general term for all places of amusement through the ear or eye, in which men assemble in order to be amused by some entertainment presented to all at the same time and in common. Thus, an old Puritan divine says:—"Those who attend public worship and sermons only to amuse themselves, make a theatre of the church, and turn God's house into the devil's. *Theatra ædes diabololatricæ.*" The most important and dignified species of this *genus* is, doubtless, the stage, (*res theatralis histrionica*), which, in addition to the generic definition above given, may be characterized in its idea, or according to what it does, or ought to, aim at, as a combination of several or of all the fine arts in an harmonious whole, having a distinct end of its own, to which the peculiar end of each of the component arts, taken separately, is made subordinate and subservient,—that, namely, of imitating reality—whether external things, actions, or passions—under a semblance of reality. Thus, Claude imitates a landscape at sunset, but only as a picture; while a forest-scene is not presented to the spectators as a picture, but as a forest; and though, in the full sense of the word, we are no more deceived by the one than by the other, yet are our feelings very differently

affected; and the pleasure derived from the one is not composed of the same elements as that afforded by the other, even on the supposition that the *quantum* of both were equal. In the former, a picture, it is a condition of all genuine delight that we should not be deceived; in the latter, stage-scenery, (inasmuch as its principal end is not in or for itself, as is the case in a picture, but to be an assistance and means to an end out of itself) its very purpose is to produce as much illusion as its nature permits. These, and all other stage presentations, are to produce a sort of temporary half-faith, which the spectator encourages in himself and supports by a voluntary contribution on his own part, because he knows that it is at all times in his power to see the thing as it really is. I have often observed that little children are actually deceived by stage-scenery, never by pictures; though even these produce an effect on their impressible minds, which they do not on the minds of adults. The child, if strongly impressed, does not indeed positively think the picture to be the reality; but yet he does not think the contrary. As Sir George Beaumont was shewing me a very fine engraving from Rubens, representing a storm at sea without any vessel or boat introduced, my little boy, then about five years old, came dancing and singing into the room, and all at once (if I may so say) *tumbled in* upon the print. He instantly started, stood silent and motionless, with the strongest expression, first of wonder and then of grief in his eyes and countenance, and at length said, "And where is the ship? But that is sunk, and the men are all drowned!" still keeping his eyes fixed on the print. Now what pictures are to little children, stage illusion is to men, provided they retain any part of the child's sensibility; except, that in the latter instance, the suspension of the act of comparison, which permits this sort of negative belief, is somewhat more assisted by the will, than in that of a child respecting a picture.

The true stage-illusion in this and in all other things consists—not in the mind's judging it to be a forest, but, in its remission of the judgment that it is not a forest. And this subject of stage-illusion is so important, and so many practical errors and false criticisms may arise, and indeed have arisen, either from reasoning on it as actual

delusion, (the strange notion, on which the French critics built up their theory, and on which the French poets justify the construction of their tragedies), or from denying it altogether, (which seems the end of Dr. Johnson's reasoning, and which, as extremes meet, would lead to the very same consequences, by excluding whatever would not be judged probable by us in our coolest state of feeling, with all our faculties in even balance), that these few remarks will, I hope, be pardoned, if they should serve either to explain or to illustrate the point. For not only are we never absolutely deluded—or any thing like it, but the attempt to cause the highest delusion possible to beings in their senses sitting in a theatre, is a gross fault, incident only to low minds, which, feeling that they cannot affect the heart or head permanently, endeavour to call forth the momentary affections. There ought never to be more pain than is compatible with co-existing pleasure, and to be amply repaid by thought.

Shakspeare found the infant stage demanding an intermixture of ludicrous character as imperiously as that of Greece did the chorus, and high language accordant. And there are many advantages in this;—a greater assimilation to nature, a greater scope of power, more truths, and more feelings;—the effects of contrast, as in Lear and the Fool; and especially this, that the true language of passion becomes sufficiently elevated by your having previously heard, in the same piece, the lighter conversation of men under no strong emotion. The very nakedness of the stage, too, was advantageous,—for the drama thence became something between recitation and a re-presentation; and the absence or paucity of scenes allowed a freedom from the laws of unity of place and unity of time, the observance of which must either confine the drama to as few subjects as may be counted on the fingers, or involve gross improbabilities, far more striking than the violation would have caused. Thence, also, was precluded the danger of a false ideal,—of aiming at more than what is possible on the whole. What play of the ancients, with reference to their ideal, does not hold out more glaring absurdities than any in Shakspeare? On the Greek plan a man could more easily be a poet than a dramatist; upon our plan more easily a dramatist than a poet.

THE DRAMA GENERALLY, AND PUBLIC TASTE.

UNACCUSTOMED to address such an audience, and having lost by a long interval of confinement the advantages of my former short schooling, I had miscalculated in my last Lecture the proportion of my matter to my time, and by bad economy and unskilful management, the several heads of my discourse failed in making the entire performance correspond with the promise publicly circulated in the weekly annunciation of the subjects, to be treated. It would indeed have been wiser in me, and perhaps better on the whole, if I had caused my Lectures to be announced only as continuations of the main subject. But if I be, as perforce I must be, gratified by the recollection of whatever has appeared to give you pleasure, I am conscious of something better, though less flattering, a sense of unfeigned gratitude for your forbearance with my defects. Like affectionate guardians, you see without disgust the awkwardness, and witness with sympathy the growing pains, of a youthful endeavour, and look forward with a hope, which is its own reward, to the contingent results of practice—to its intellectual maturity.

In my last address I defined poetry to be the art, or whatever better term our language may afford, of representing external nature and human thoughts, both relatively to human affections, so as to cause the production of as great immediate pleasure in each part, as is compatible with the largest possible sum of pleasure on the whole. Now this definition applies equally to painting and music as to poetry; and in truth the term poetry is alike applicable to all three. The vehicle alone constitutes the difference; and the term 'poetry' is rightly applied by eminence to measured words, only because the sphere of their action is far wider, the power of giving permanence to them much more certain, and incomparably greater the facility, by which men, not defective by nature or disease, may be enabled to derive habitual pleasure and instruction from them. On my mentioning these considerations to a painter of great

genius, who had been, from a most honourable enthusiasm, extolling his own art, he was so struck with their truth, that he exclaimed, "I want no other arguments;—poetry, that is, verbal poetry, must be the greatest; all that proves final causes in the world, proves this; it would be shocking to think otherwise!"—And in truth, deeply, O! far more than words can express, as I venerate the Last Judgment and the Prophets of Michel Angelo Buonaroti,—yet the very pain which I repeatedly felt as I lost myself in gazing upon them, the painful consideration that their having been painted in *fresco* was the sole cause that they had not been abandoned to all the accidents of a dangerous transportation to a distant capital, and that the same caprice, which made the Neapolitan soldiery destroy all the exquisite masterpieces on the walls of the church of the *Trinitado Monte*, after the retreat of their antagonist barbarians, might as easily have made vanish the rooms and open gallery of Raffael, and the yet more unapproachable wonders of the sublime Florentine in the Sixtine Chapel, forced upon my mind the reflection; How grateful the human race ought to be that the works of Euclid, Newton, Plato, Milton, Shakspeare, are not subjected to similar contingencies,—that they and their fellows, and the great, though inferior, peerage of undying intellect, are secured;—secured even from a second irruption of Goths and Vandals, in addition to many other safeguards, by the vast empire of English language, laws, and religion founded in America, through the overflow of the power and the virtue of my country;—and that now the great and certain works of genuine fame can only cease to act for mankind, when men themselves cease to be men, or when the planet on which they exist, shall have altered its relations, or have ceased to be. Lord Bacon, in the language of the gods, if I may use an Homeric phrase, has expressed a similar thought:—

Lastly, leaving the vulgar arguments, that by learning man excelleth man in that wherein man excelleth beasts; that by learning man ascendeth to the heavens and their motions, where in body he cannot come, and the like; let us conclude with the dignity and excellency of knowledge and learning in that whereunto man's nature doth most aspire, which is, immortality or continuance: for to this tendeth generation, and raising of houses and families; to this tend buildings, foundations, and monuments;

to this tendeth the desire of memory, fame, and celebration, and in effect the strength of all other human desires. We see then how far the monuments of wit and learning are more durable than the monuments of power, or of the hands. For have not the verses of Homer continued twenty-five hundred years, or more, without the loss of a syllable or letter; during which time, infinite palaces, temples, castles, cities, have been decayed and demolished? It is not possible to have the true pictures or statues of Cyrus, Alexander, Cæsar; no, nor of the kings or great personages of much later years; for the originals cannot last, and the copies cannot but lose of the life and truth. But the images of men's wits and knowledges remain in books, exempted from the wrong of time, and capable of perpetual renovation. Neither are they fitly to be called images, because they generate still, and cast their seeds in the minds of others, provoking and causing infinite actions and opinions in succeeding ages: so that, if the invention of the ship was thought so noble, which carrieth riches and commodities from place to place, and consociateth the most remote regions in participation of their fruits; how much more are letters to be magnified, which, as ships, pass through the vast seas of time, and make ages so distant to participate of the wisdom, illuminations, and inventions, the one of the other?[1]

But let us now consider what the drama should be. And first, it is not a copy, but an imitation, of nature. This is the universal principle of the fine arts. In all well laid out grounds what delight do we feel from that balance and antithesis of feelings and thoughts! How natural! we say;—but the very wonder that caused the exclamation, implies that we perceived art at the same moment. We catch the hint from nature itself. Whenever in mountains or cataracts we discover a likeness to any thing artificial which yet we know is not artificial—what pleasure! And so it is in appearances known to be artificial, which appear to be natural. This applies in due degrees, regulated by steady good sense, from a clump of trees to the Paradise Lost or Othello. It would be easy to apply it to painting and even, though with greater abstraction of thought, and by more subtle yet equally just analogies—to music. But this belongs to others; suffice it that one great principle is common to all the fine arts, a principle which probably is the condition of all consciousness, without which we should feel and imagine only by discontinuous moments, and be plants or brute animals instead of men;—I mean that ever-varying balance, or balancing, of images, notions,

[1] Advancement of Learning, book 1, *sub fine*.

or feelings, conceived as in opposition to each other; —in short, the perception of identity and contrariety; the least degree of which constitutes likeness, the greatest absolute difference; but the infinite gradations between these two form all the play and all the interest of our intellectual and moral being, till it leads us to a feeling and an object more awful than it seems to me compatible with even the present subject to utter aloud, though I am most desirous to suggest it. For there alone are all things at once different and the same; there alone, as the principle of all things, does distinction exist unaided by division; there are will and reason, succession of time and unmoving eternity, infinite change and ineffable rest!—

> Return Alpheus! the dread voice is past
> Which shrunk thy streams!
>
> ———Thou honour'd flood,
> Smooth-*flowing* Avon, crown'd with vocal reeds,
> That strain I heard, was of a higher mood!—
> But now my *voice* proceeds.

We may divide a dramatic poet's characteristics before we enter into the component merits of any one work, and with reference only to those things which are to be the materials of all, into language, passion, and character; always bearing in mind that these must act and react on each other,—the language inspired by the passion, and the language and the passion modified and differenced by the character. To the production of the highest excellencies in these three, there are requisite in the mind of the author;—good sense; talent; sensibility; imagination;—and to the perfection of a work we should add two faculties of lesser importance, yet necessary for the ornaments and foliage of the column and the roof —fancy and a quick sense of beauty.

As to language;—it cannot be supposed that the poet should make his characters say all that they would, or that, his whole drama considered, each scene, or paragraph should be such as, on cool examination, we can conceive it likely that men in such situations would say, in that order, or with that perfection. And yet, according to my feelings, it is a very inferior kind of poetry, in which, as in the French tragedies, men are made to talk in a

style which few indeed even of the wittiest can be supposed to converse in, and which both is, and on a moment's reflection appears to be, the natural produce of the hot-bed of vanity, namely, the closet of an author, who is actuated originally by a desire to excite surprise and wonderment at his own superiority to other men,—instead of having felt so deeply on certain subjects, or in consequence of certain imaginations, as to make it almost a necessity of his nature to seek for sympathy,—no doubt, with that honourable desire of permanent action which distinguishes genius.—Where then is the difference?—In this that each part should be proportionate, though the whole may be perhaps impossible. At all events, it should be compatible with sound sense and logic in the mind of the poet himself.

It is to be lamented that we judge of books by books, instead of referring what we read to our own experience. One great use of books is to make their contents a motive for observation. The German tragedies have in some respects been justly ridiculed. In them the dramatist often becomes a novelist in his directions to the actors, and thus degrades tragedy into pantomime. Yet still the consciousness of the poet's mind must be diffused over that of the reader or spectator: but he himself, according to his genius, elevates us, and by being always in keeping, prevents us from perceiving any strangeness, though we feel great exultation. Many different kinds of style may be admirable, both in different men, and in different parts of the same poem.

See the different language which strong feelings may justify in Shylock, and learn from Shakspeare's conduct of that character the terrible force of every plain and calm diction, when known to proceed from a resolved and impassioned man.

It is especially with reference to the drama, and its characteristics in any given nation, or at any particular period, that the dependence of genius on the public taste becomes a matter of the deepest importance. I do not mean that taste which springs merely from caprice or fashionable imitation, and which, in fact, genius can, and by degrees will, create for itself; but that which arises out of wide-grasping and heart-enrooted causes, which is epidemic, and in the very air that all breathe.

This it is which kills, or withers, or corrupts. Socrates, indeed, might walk arm and arm with Hygeia, whilst pestilence, with a thousand furies running to and fro, and clashing against each other in a complexity and agglomeration of horrors, was shooting her darts of fire and venom all around him. Even such was Milton; yea, and such, in spite of all that has been babbled by his critics in pretended excuse for his damning, because for them too profound, excellencies,—such was Shakspeare. But alas! the exceptions prove the rule. For who will dare to force his way out of the crowd,—not of the mere vulgar,—but of the vain and banded aristocracy of intellect, and presume to join the almost supernatural beings that stand by themselves aloof?

Of this diseased epidemic influence there are two forms especially preclusive of tragic worth. The first is the necessary growth of a sense and love of the ludicrous, and a morbid sensibility of the assimilative power,—an inflammation produced by cold and weakness,—which in the boldest bursts of passion will lie in wait for a jeer at any phrase, that may have an accidental coincidence in the mere words with something base or trivial. For instance,—to express woods, not on a plain, but clothing a hill, which overlooks a valley, or dell, or river, or the sea,—the trees rising one above another, as the spectators in an ancient theatre,—I know no other word in our language, (bookish and pedantic terms out of the question,) but *hanging* woods, the *sylvæ superimpendentes* of Catullus;[1] yet let some wit call out in a slang tone,—"the gallows!" and a peal of laughter would damn the play. Hence it is that so many dull pieces have had a decent run, only because nothing unusual above, or absurd below, mediocrity furnished an occasion,—a spark for the explosive materials collected behind the orchestra. But it would take a volume of no ordinary size, however laconically the sense were expressed, if it were meant to instance the effects, and unfold all the causes, of this disposition upon the moral, intellectual, and even physical character of a people, with its influences on domestic life and individual deportment. A good document upon this subject would be the history of Paris

[1] Confestim Peneos adest, viridantia Tempe,
Tempæ, quæ cingunt sylvæ superimpendentes.
Epith. Pel. et Th. 285.

society and of French, that is, Parisian, literature from the commencement of the latter half of the reign of Louis XIV. to that of Buonaparte, compared with the preceding philosophy and poetry even of Frenchmen themselves.

The second form, or more properly, perhaps, another distinct cause, of this diseased disposition is matter of exultation to the philanthropist and philosopher, and of regret to the poet, the painter, and the statuary alone, and to them only as poets, painters, and statuaries;—namely, the security, the comparative equability, and ever increasing sameness of human life. Men are now so seldom thrown into wild circumstances, and violences of excitement, that the language of such states, the laws of association of feeling with thought, the starts and strange far-flights of the assimilative power on the slightest and least obvious likeness presented by thoughts, words, or objects,—these are all judged of by authority, not by actual experience,—by what men have been accustomed to regard as symbols of these states, and not the natural symbols, or self-manifestations of them.

Even so it is in the language of man, and in that of nature. The sound *sun*, or the figures *s*, *u*, *n*, are purely arbitrary modes of recalling the object, and for visual mere objects they are not only sufficient, but have infinite advantages from their very nothingness *per se*. But the language of nature is a subordinate *Logos*, that was in the beginning, and was with the thing it represented, and was the thing it represented.

Now the language of Shakspeare, in his Lear for instance, is a something intermediate between these two; or rather it is the former blended with the latter,—the arbitrary, not merely recalling the cold notion of the thing, but expressing the reality of it, and, as arbitrary language is an heir-loom of the human race, being itself a part of that which it manifests. What shall I deduce from the preceding positions? Even this,—the appropriate, the never to be too much valued advantage of the theatre, if only the actors were what we know they have been,—a delightful, yet most effectual remedy for this dead palsy of the public mind. What would appear mad or ludicrous in a book, when presented to the senses under the form of reality, and with the truth of nature, supplies a species of

actual experience. This is indeed the special privilege of a great actor over a great poet. No part was ever played in perfection, but nature justified herself in the hearts of all her children, in what state soever they were, short of absolute moral exhaustion, or downright stupidity. There is no time given to ask questions, or to pass judgments; we are taken by storm, and, though in the histrionic art many a clumsy counterfeit, by caricature of one or two features, may gain applause as a fine likeness, yet never was the very thing rejected as a counterfeit. O! when I think of the inexhaustible mine of virgin treasure in our Shakspeare, that I have been almost daily reading him since I was ten years old,—that the thirty intervening years have been unintermittingly and not fruitlessly employed in the study of the Greek, Latin, English, Italian, Spanish and German *belle lettrists*, and the last fifteen years in addition, far more intensely in the analysis of the laws of life and reason as they exist in man,—and that upon every step I have made forward in taste, in acquisition of facts from history or my own observation, and in knowledge of the different laws of being and their apparent exceptions, from accidental collision of disturbing forces,—that at every new accession of information, after every successful exercise of meditation, and every fresh presentation of experience, I have unfailingly discovered a proportionate increase of wisdom and intuition in Shakspeare;—when I know this, and know too, that by a conceivable and possible, though hardly to be expected, arrangement of the British theatres, not all, indeed, but a large, a very large, proportion of this indefinite all—(round which no comprehension has yet drawn the line of circumscription, so as to say to itself, 'I have seen the whole')—might be sent into the heads and hearts—into the very souls of the mass of mankind, to whom, except by this living comment and interpretation, it must remain for ever a sealed volume, a deep well without a wheel or a windlass;—it seems to me a pardonable enthusiasm to steal away from sober likelihood, and share in so rich a feast in the faery world of possibility! Yet even in the grave cheerfulness of a circumspect hope, much, very much, might be done; enough, assuredly, to furnish a kind and strenuous nature with ample motives for the attempt to effect what may be effected.

SHAKSPEARE, A POET GENERALLY.

CLOTHED in radiant armour, and authorized by titles sure and manifold, as a poet, Shakspeare came forward to demand the throne of fame, as the dramatic poet of England. His excellences compelled even his contemporaries to seat him on that throne, although there were giants in those days contending for the same honour. Hereafter I would fain endeavour to make out the title of the English drama as created by, and existing in, Shakspeare, and its right to the supremacy of dramatic excellence in general. But he had shown himself a poet, previously to his appearance as a dramatic poet; and had no Lear, no Othello, no Henry IV., no Twelfth Night ever appeared, we must have admitted that Shakspeare possessed the chief, if not every, requisite of a poet,—deep feeling and exquisite sense of beauty, both as exhibited to the eye in the combinations of form, and to the ear in sweet and appropriate melody; that these feelings were under the command of his own will; that in his very first productions he projected his mind out of his own particular being, and felt, and made others feel, on subjects no way connected with himself, except by force of contemplation and that sublime faculty by which a great mind becomes that, on which it meditates. To this must be added that affectionate love of nature and natural objects, without which no man could have observed so steadily, or painted so truly and passionately, the very minutest beauties of the external world:—

> And when thou hast on foot the purblind hare,
> Mark the poor wretch; to overshoot his troubles,
> How he outruns the wind, and with what care,
> He cranks and crosses with a thousand doubles:
> The many musits through the which he goes
> Are like a labyrinth to amaze his foes.
>
> Sometimes he runs among the flock of sheep,
> To make the cunning hounds mistake their smell;
> And sometime where earth-delving conies keep,
> To stop the loud pursuers in their yell;
> And sometime sorteth with a herd of deer:
> Danger deviseth shifts, wit waits on fear.
>
> For there his smell with others' being mingled,
> The hot scent-snuffing hounds are driven to doubt,
> Ceasing their clamorous cry, till they have singled,

With much ado, the cold fault cleanly out,
Then do they spend their mouths; echo replies,
As if another chase were in the skies.

By this poor Wat far off, upon a hill,
Stands on his hinder legs with listening ear,
To hearken if his foes pursue him still:
Anon their loud alarums he doth hear,
And now his grief may be compared well
To one sore-sick, that hears the passing bell.

Then shalt thou see the dew-bedabbled wretch
Turn, and return, indenting with the way:
Each envious briar his weary legs doth scratch,
Each shadow makes him stop, each murmur stay.
For misery is trodden on by many,
And being low, never relieved by any.

Venus and Adonis.

And the preceding description:—

But lo! from forth a copse that neighbours by,
A breeding jennet, lusty, young and proud, &c.

is much more admirable, but in parts less fitted for quotation.

Moreover Shakspeare had shown that he possessed fancy, considered as the faculty of bringing together images dissimilar in the main by some one point or more of likeness, as in such a passage as this:—

Full gently now she takes him by the hand,
A lily prisoned in a jail of snow,
Or ivory in an alabaster band:
So white a friend ingirts so white a foe! *Ib.*

And still mounting the intellectual ladder, he had as unequivocally proved the indwelling in his mind of imagination, or the power by which one image or feeling is made to modify many others, and by a sort of fusion to force many into one;—that which afterwards showed itself in such might and energy in Lear, where the deep anguish of a father spreads the feeling of ingratitude and cruelty over the very elements of heaven;—and which, combining many circumstances into one moment of consciousness, tends to produce that ultimate end of all human thought and human feeling, unity, and thereby the reduction of the spirit to its principle and fountain, who is alone truly one. Various are the workings of this the greatest faculty of the human mind, both passionate

and tranquil. In its tranquil and purely pleasurable operation, it acts chiefly by creating out of many things, as they would have appeared in the description of an ordinary mind, detailed in unimpassioned succession, a oneness, even as nature, the greatest of poets, acts upon us, when we open our eyes upon an extended prospect. Thus the flight of Adonis in the dusk of the evening :—

> Look ! how a bright star shooteth from the sky ;
> So glides he in the night from Venus' eye !

How many images and feelings are here brought together without effort and without discord, in the beauty of Adonis, the rapidity of his flight, the yearning, yet hopelessness, of the enamoured gazer, while a shadowy ideal character is thrown over the whole ! Or this power acts by impressing the stamp of humanity, and of human feelings, on inanimate or mere natural objects :—

> Lo ! here the gentle lark, weary of rest,
> From his moist cabinet mounts up on high,
> And wakes the morning, from whose silver breast
> The sun ariseth in his majesty,
> Who doth the world so gloriously behold,
> The cedar-tops and hills seem burnish'd gold.

Or again, it acts by so carrying on the eye of the reader as to make him almost lose the consciousness of words,—to make him see every thing flashed, as Wordsworth has grandly and appropriately said,—

> *Flashed* upon that inward eye
> Which is the bliss of solitude ;—

and this without exciting any painful or laborious attention, without any anatomy of description, (a fault not uncommon in descriptive poetry)—but with the sweetness and easy movement of nature. This energy is an absolute essential of poetry, and of itself would constitute a poet, though not one of the highest class ;—it is, however, a most hopeful symptom, and the Venus and Adonis is one continued specimen of it.

In this beautiful poem there is an endless activity of thought in all the possible associations of thought with thought, thought with feeling, or with words, of feelings with feelings, and of words with words.

Even as the sun, with purple-colour'd face,
Had ta'en his last leave of the weeping morn,
Rose-cheek'd Adonis hied him to the chase:
Hunting he loved, but love he laughed to scorn.
Sick-thoughted Venus makes amain unto him,
And like a bold-faced suitor 'gins to woo him.

Remark the humanizing imagery and circumstances of the first two lines, and the activity of thought in the play of words in the fourth line. The whole stanza presents at once the time, the appearance of the morning, and the two persons distinctly characterized, and in six simple verses puts the reader in possession of the whole argument of the poem.

Over one arm the lusty courser's rein,
Under the other was the tender boy,
Who blush'd and pouted in a dull disdain,
With leaden appetite, unapt to toy,
She red and hot, as coals of glowing fire,
He red for shame, but frosty to desire:—

This stanza and the two following afford good instances of that poetic power, which I mentioned above, of making every thing present to the imagination—both the forms, and the passions which modify those forms, either actually, as in the representations of love, or anger, or other human affections; or imaginatively, by the different manner in which inanimate objects, or objects unimpassioned themselves, are caused to be seen by the mind in moments of strong excitement, and according to the kind of the excitement,—whether of jealousy, or rage, or love, in the only appropriate sense of the word, or of the lower impulses of our nature, or finally of the poetic feeling itself. It is, perhaps, chiefly in the power of producing and reproducing the latter that the poet stands distinct.

The subject of the Venus and Adonis is unpleasing; but the poem itself is for that very reason the more illustrative of Shakspeare. There are men who can write passages of deepest pathos and even sublimity on circumstances personal to themselves and stimulative of their own passions; but they are not, therefore, on this account poets. Read that magnificent burst of woman's patriotism and exultation, Deborah's song of victory; it is glorious, but nature is the poet there. It is quite another matter to become all things and yet remain the same,—to make the

changeful god be felt in the river, the lion and the flame ;—this it is, that is the true imagination. Shakspeare writes in this poem, as if he were of another planet, charming you to gaze on the movements of Venus and Adonis, as you would on the twinkling dances of two vernal butterflies.

Finally, in this poem and the Rape of Lucrece, Shakspeare gave ample proof of his possession of a most profound, energetic, and philosophical mind, without which he might have pleased, but could not have been a great dramatic poet. Chance and the necessity of his genius combined to lead him to the drama his proper province : in his conquest of which we should consider both the difficulties which opposed him, and the advantages by which he was assisted.

Shakspeare's Judgment equal to his Genius.

Thus then Shakspeare appears, from his Venus and Adonis and Rape of Lucrece alone, apart from all his great works, to have possessed all the conditions of the true poet. Let me now proceed to destroy, as far as may be in my power, the popular notion that he was a great dramatist by mere instinct, that he grew immortal in his own despite, and sank below men of second or third-rate power, when he attempted aught beside the drama—even as bees construct their cells and manufacture their honey to admirable perfection ; but would in vain attempt to build a nest. Now this mode of reconciling a compelled sense of inferiority with a feeling of pride, began in a few pedants, who having read that Sophocles was the great model of tragedy, and Aristotle the infallible dictator of its rules, and finding that the Lear, Hamlet, Othello and other master-pieces were neither in imitation of Sophocles, nor in obedience to Aristotle,—and not having (with one or two exceptions) the courage to affirm, that the delight which their country received from generation to generation, in defiance of the alterations of circumstances and habits, was wholly groundless,—took upon them, as a happy medium and refuge, to talk of Shakspeare as a sort of beautiful *lusus naturæ*, a delightful monster,—wild, indeed, and without taste or judgment, but like the inspired idiots so much venerated in the East, uttering,

amid the strangest follies, the sublimest truths. In nine places out of ten in which I find his awful name mentioned, it is with some epithet of 'wild,' 'irregular,' 'pure child of nature,' &c. If all this be true, we must submit to it; though to a thinking mind it cannot but be painful to find any excellence, merely human, thrown out of all human analogy, and thereby leaving us neither rules for imitation, nor motives to imitate;—but if false, it is a dangerous falsehood;—for it affords a refuge to secret self-conceit, —enables a vain man at once to escape his reader's indignation by general swoln panegyrics, and merely by his *ipse dixit* to treat, as contemptible, what he has not intellect enough to comprehend, or soul to feel, without assigning any reason, or referring his opinion to any demonstrative principle;—thus leaving Shakspeare as a sort of grand Lama, adored indeed, and his very excrements prized as relics, but with no authority or real influence. I grieve that every late voluminous edition of his works would enable me to substantiate the present charge with a variety of facts one tenth of which would of themselves exhaust the time allotted to me. Every critic, who has or has not made a collection of black letter books—in itself a useful and respectable amusement,—puts on the seven-league boots of self-opinion, and strides at once from an illustrator into a supreme judge, and blind and deaf, fills his three-ounce phial at the waters of Niagara; and determines positively the greatness of the cataract to be neither more nor less than his three-ounce phial has been able to receive.

I think this a very serious subject. It is my earnest desire—my passionate endeavour,—to enforce at various times and by various arguments and instances the close and reciprocal connexion of just taste with pure morality. Without that acquaintance with the heart of man, or that docility and childlike gladness to be made acquainted with it, which those only can have, who dare look at their own hearts—and that with a steadiness which religion only has the power of reconciling with sincere humility; —without this, and the modesty produced by it, I am deeply convinced that no man, however wide his erudition, however patient his antiquarian researches, can possibly understand, or be worthy of understanding, the writings of Shakspeare.

Assuredly that criticism of Shakspeare will alone be genial which is reverential. The Englishman, who without reverence, a proud and affectionate reverence, can utter the name of William Shakspeare, stands disqualified for the office of critic. He wants one at least of the very senses, the language of which he is to employ, and will discourse, at best, but as a blind man, while the whole harmonious creation of light and shade with all its subtle interchange of deepening and dissolving colours rises in silence to the silent *fiat* of the uprising Apollo. However inferior in ability I may be to some who have followed me, I own I am proud that I was the first in time who publicly demonstrated to the full extent of the position, that the supposed irregularity and extravagances of Shakspeare were the mere dreams of a pedantry that arraigned the eagle because it had not the dimensions of the swan. In all the successive courses of lectures delivered by me, since my first attempt at the Royal Institution, it has been, and it still remains, my object, to prove that in all points from the most important to the most minute, the judgment of Shakspeare is commensurate with his genius,—nay, that his genius reveals itself in his judgment, as in its most exalted form. And the more gladly do I recur to this subject from the clear conviction, that to judge aright, and with distinct consciousness of the grounds of our judgment, concerning the works of Shakspeare, implies the power and the means of judging rightly of all other works of intellect, those of abstract science alone excepted.

It is a painful truth that not only individuals, but even whole nations, are ofttimes so enslaved to the habits of their education and immediate circumstances, as not to judge disinterestedly even on those subjects, the very pleasure arising from which consists in its disinterestedness, namely, on subjects of taste and polite literature. Instead of deciding concerning their own modes and customs by any rule of reason, nothing appears rational, becoming, or beautiful to them, but what coincides with the peculiarities of their education. In this narrow circle, individuals may attain to exquisite discrimination, as the French critics have done in their own literature; but a true critic can no more be such without placing himself on some central point, from which he may command the whole, that is, some general rule, which, founded in reason,

or the faculties common to all men, must therefore apply to each,—than an astronomer can explain the movements of the solar system without taking his stand in the sun. And let me remark, that this will not tend to produce despotism, but, on the contrary, true tolerance, in the critic. He will, indeed, require, as the spirit and substance of a work, something true in human nature itself, and independent of all circumstances; but in the mode of applying it, he will estimate genius and judgment according to the felicity with which the imperishable soul of intellect shall have adapted itself to the age, the place, and the existing manners. The error he will expose, lies in reversing this, and holding up the mere circumstances as perpetual to the utter neglect of the power which can alone animate them. For art cannot exist without, or apart from, nature; and what has man of his own to give to his fellow man, but his own thoughts and feelings, and his observations, so far as they are modified by his own thoughts or feelings?

Let me, then, once more submit this question to minds emancipated alike from national, or party, or sectarian prejudice:—Are the plays of Shakspeare works of rude uncultivated genius, in which the splendour of the parts compensates, if aught can compensate, for the barbarous shapelessness and irregularity of the whole?—Or is the form equally admirable with the matter, and the judgment of the great poet, not less deserving our wonder than his genius?—Or, again, to repeat the question in other words:—Is Shakspeare a great dramatic poet on account only of those beauties and excellences which he possesses in common with the ancients, but with diminished claims to our love and honour to the full extent of his differences from them?—Or are these very differences additional proofs of poetic wisdom, at once results and symbols of living power as contrasted with lifeless mechanism—of free and rival originality as contra-distinguished from servile imitation, or, more accurately, a blind copying of effects, instead of a true imitation, of the essential principles?—Imagine not that I am about to oppose genius to rules. No! the comparative value of these rules is the very cause to be tried. The spirit of poetry, like all other living powers, must of necessity circumscribe itself by rules, were it only to unite power with beauty. It must

embody in order to reveal itself; but a living body is of necessity an organized one; and what is organization but the connection of parts in and for a whole, so that each part is at once end and means?—This is no discovery of criticism;—it is a necessity of the human mind; and all nations have felt and obeyed it, in the invention of metre, and measured sounds, as the vehicle and *involucrum* of poetry—itself a fellow-growth from the same life,—even as the bark is to the tree!

No work of true genius dares want its appropriate form, neither indeed is there any danger of this. As it must not, so genius cannot, be lawless; for it is even this that constitutes it genius—the power of acting creatively under laws of its own origination. How then comes it that not only single *Zoili*, but whole nations have combined in unhesitating condemnation of our great dramatist, as a sort of African nature, rich in beautiful monsters—as a wild heath where islands of fertility look the greener from the surrounding waste, where the loveliest plants now shine out among unsightly weeds, and now are choked by their parasitic growth, so intertwined that we cannot disentangle the weed without snapping the flower?—In this statement I have had no reference to the vulgar abuse of Voltaire,[1] save as far as his charges are coincident with the decisions of Shakspeare's own commentators and (so they would tell you) almost idolatrous admirers. The true ground of the mistake lies in the confounding mechanical regularity with organic form. The form is mechanic, when on any given material we impress a pre-determined form, not necessarily arising out of the properties of the material; —as when to a mass of wet clay we give whatever shape we wish it to retain when hardened. The organic form, on the other hand, is innate; it shapes, as it developes, itself from within, and the fulness of its development is

[1] Take a slight specimen of it.

Je suis bien loin assurément de justifier en tout la tragédie d'Hamlet: *c'est une pièce grossière et barbare, qui ne serait pas supportée par la plus vile populace de la France et de l'Italie.* Hamlet y devient fou au second acte, et sa maîtresse folle au troisième; le prince tue le père de sa maîtresse, feignant de tuer un rat, et l'heroïne se jette dans la rivière. On fait sa fosse sur le théâtre; des fossoyeurs disent des *quolibets* dignes d'eux, en tenant dans leurs mains des têtes de morts; le prince Hamlet répond à leurs *grossièretés abominables par des folies non moins dégoûtantes.* Pendant ce temps-là, un des acteurs fait la conquête de la Pologne. *Hamlet, sa mère, et son beau-père boivent ensemble sur le théâtre; on chante à table, on s'y querelle, on se bat, on se tue: on croirait que cet ouvrage est le fruit de l'imagination d'un sauvage ivre.* Dissertation before Semiramis.

This is not, perhaps, very like Hamlet; but nothing can be more like Voltaire. *Ed.*

one and the same with the perfection of its outward form. Such as the life is, such is the form. Nature, the prime genial artist, inexhaustible in diverse powers, is equally inexhaustible in forms;—each exterior is the physiognomy of the being within,—its true image reflected and thrown out from the concave mirror;—and even such is the appropriate excellence of her chosen poet, of our own Shakspeare,—himself a nature humanized, a genial understanding directing self-consciously a power and an implicit wisdom deeper even than our consciousness.

I greatly dislike beauties and selections in general; but as proof positive of his unrivalled excellence, I should like to try Shakspeare by this criterion. Make out your amplest catalogue of all the human faculties, as reason or the moral law, the will, the feeling of the coincidence of the two (a feeling *sui generis et demonstratio demonstrationum*) called the conscience, the understanding or prudence, wit, fancy, imagination, judgment,—and then of the objects on which these are to be employed, as the beauties, the terrors, and the seeming caprices of nature, the realities and the capabilities, that is, the actual and the ideal, of the human mind, conceived as an individual or as a social being, as in innocence or in guilt, in a play-paradise, or in a war-field of temptation;—and then compare with Shakspeare under each of these heads all or any of the writers in prose and verse that have ever lived! Who, that is competent to judge, doubts the result?—And ask your own hearts,—ask your own common sense—to conceive the possibility of this man being—I say not, the drunken savage of that wretched sciolist, whom Frenchmen, to their shame, have honoured before their elder and better worthies,—but the anomalous, the wild, the irregular, genius of our daily criticism! What! are we to have miracles in sport?—Or, I speak reverently, does God choose idiots by whom to convey divine truths to man?

RECAPITULATION, AND SUMMARY

Of the Characteristics of Shakspeare's Dramas.[1]

In lectures, of which amusement forms a large part of the object, there are some peculiar difficulties. The architect

[1] For the most part communicated by Mr. Justice Coleridge. *Ed.*

places his foundation out of sight, and the musician tunes his instrument before he makes his appearance; but the lecturer has to try his chords in the presence of the assembly; an operation not likely, indeed, to produce much pleasure, but yet indispensably necessary to a right understanding of the subject to be developed.

Poetry in essence is as familiar to barbarous as to civilized nations. The Laplander and the savage Indian are cheered by it as well as the inhabitants of London and Paris;—its spirit takes up and incorporates surrounding materials, as a plant clothes itself with soil and climate, whilst it exhibits the working of a vital principle within independent of all accidental circumstances. And to judge with fairness of an author's works, we ought to distinguish what is inward and essential from what is outward and circumstantial. It is essential to poetry that it be simple, and appeal to the elements and primary laws of our nature; that it be sensuous, and by its imagery elicit truth at a flash; that it be impassioned, and be able to move our feelings and awaken our affections. In comparing different poets with each other, we should inquire which have brought into the fullest play our imagination and our reason, or have created the greatest excitement and produced the completest harmony. If we consider great exquisiteness of language and sweetness of metre alone, it is impossible to deny to Pope the character of a delightful writer; but whether he be a poet, must depend upon our definition of the word; and, doubtless, if every thing that pleases be poetry, Pope's satires and epistles must be poetry. This, I must say, that poetry, as distinguished from other modes of composition, does not rest in metre, and that it is not poetry, if it make no appeal to our passions or our imagination. One character belongs to all true poets, that they write from a principle within, not originating in any thing without; and that the true poet's work in its form, its shapings, and its modifications, is distinguished from all other works that assume to belong to the class of poetry, as a natural from an artificial flower, or as the mimic garden of a child from an enamelled meadow. In the former the flowers are broken from their stems and stuck into the ground; they are beautiful to the eye and fragrant to the sense, but their colours soon fade, and their odour is transient as the

smile of the planter; — while the meadow may be visited again and again with renewed delight; its beauty is innate in the soil, and its bloom is of the freshness of nature.

The next ground of critical judgment, and point of comparison, will be as to how far a given poet has been influenced by accidental circumstances. As a living poet must surely write, not for the ages past, but for that in which he lives, and those which are to follow, it is, on the one hand, natural that he should not violate, and on the other, necessary that he should not depend on, the mere manners and modes of his day. See how little does Shakspeare leave us to regret that he was born in his particular age! The great æra in modern times was what is called the Restoration of Letters;—the ages preceding it are called the dark ages; but it would be more wise, perhaps, to call them the ages in which we were in the dark. It is usually overlooked that the supposed dark period was not universal, but partial and successive, or alternate; that the dark age of England was not the dark age of Italy, but that one country was in its light and vigour, whilst another was in its gloom and bondage. But no sooner had the Reformation sounded through Europe like the blast of an archangel's trumpet, than from king to peasant there arose an enthusiasm for knowledge; the discovery of a manuscript became the subject of an embassy; Erasmus read by moonlight, because he could not afford a torch, and begged a penny, not for the love of charity, but for the love of learning. The three great points of attention were religion, morals, and taste; men of genius as well as men of learning, who in this age need to be so widely distinguished, then alike became copyists of the ancients; and this, indeed, was the only way by which the taste of mankind could be improved, or their understandings informed. Whilst Dante imagined himself a humble follower of Virgil, and Ariosto of Homer, they were both unconscious of that greater power working within them, which in many points carried them beyond their supposed originals. All great discoveries bear the stamp of the age in which they are made;—hence we perceive the effects of the purer religion of the moderns, visible for the most part in their lives; and in reading their works we should not content ourselves with the mere narratives

of events long since passed, but should learn to apply their maxims and conduct to ourselves.

Having intimated that times and manners lend their form and pressure to genius, let me once more draw a slight parallel between the ancient and modern stage, the stages of Greece and of England. The Greeks were polytheists; their religion was local; almost the only object of all their knowledge, art and taste, was their gods; and, accordingly, their productions were, if the expression may be allowed, statuesque, whilst those of the moderns are picturesque. The Greeks reared a structure, which in its parts, and as a whole, filled the mind with the calm and elevated impression of perfect beauty, and symmetrical proportion. The moderns also produced a whole, a more striking whole; but it was by blending materials and fusing the parts together. And as the Pantheon is to York Minster or Westminster Abbey, so is Sophocles compared with Shakspeare; in the one a completeness, a satisfaction, an excellence, on which the mind rests with complacency; in the other a multitude of interlaced materials, great and little, magnificent and mean, accompanied, indeed, with the sense of a falling short of perfection, and yet, at the same time, so promising of our social and individual progression, that we would not, if we could, exchange it for that repose of the mind which dwells on the forms of symmetry in the acquiescent admiration of grace. This general characteristic of the ancient and modern drama might be illustrated by a parallel of the ancient and modern music;—the one consisting of melody arising from a succession only of pleasing sounds,—the modern embracing harmony also, the result of combination and the effect of a whole.

I have said, and I say it again, that great as was the genius of Shakspeare, his judgment was at least equal to it. Of this any one will be convinced, who attentively considers those points in which the dramas of Greece and England differ, from the dissimilitude of circumstances by which each was modified and influenced. The Greek stage had its origin in the ceremonies of a sacrifice, such as of the goat to Bacchus, whom we most erroneously regard as merely the jolly god of wine;—for among the ancients he was venerable, as the symbol of that power which acts without our consciousness in the vital energies of nature,—

the *vinum mundi*,—as Apollo was that of the conscious agency of our intellectual being. The heroes of old under the influences of this Bacchic enthusiasm performed more than human actions;—hence tales of the favorite champions soon passed into dialogue. On the Greek stage the chorus was always before the audience; the curtain was never dropped, as we should say; and change of place being therefore, in general, impossible, the absurd notion of condemning it merely as improbable in itself was never entertained by any one. If we can believe ourselves at Thebes in one act, we may believe ourselves at Athens in the next. If a story lasts twenty-four hours or twenty-four years, it is equally improbable. There seems to be no just boundary but what the feelings prescribe. But on the Greek stage where the same persons were perpetually before the audience, great judgment was necessary in venturing on any such change. The poets never, therefore, attempted to impose on the senses by bringing places to men, but they did bring men to places, as in the well known instance in the Eumenides, where during an evident retirement of the chorus from the orchestra, the scene is changed to Athens, and Orestes is first introduced in the temple of Minerva, and the chorus of Furies come in afterwards in pursuit of him.[1]

In the Greek drama there were no formal divisions into scenes and acts; there were no means, therefore, of allowing for the necessary lapse of time between one part of the dialogue and another, and unity of time in a strict sense was, of course, impossible. To overcome that difficulty of accounting for time, which is effected on the modern stage by dropping a curtain, the judgment and great genius of the ancients supplied music and measured motion, and with the lyric ode filled up the vacuity. In the story of the Agamemnon of Æschylus, the capture of Troy is supposed to be announced by a fire lighted on the Asiatic shore, and the transmission of the signal by successive beacons to Mycenæ. The signal is first seen at the 21st line, and the herald from Troy itself enters at the 486th, and Agamemnon himself at the 783rd line. But the practical absurdity of

[1] Æsch. Eumen. v. 230-239. *Notandum est, scenam jam Athenas translatam sic institui, ut primo Orestes solus conspiciatur in templo Minervæ supplex ejus simulacrum venerans; paulo post autem eum consequantur Eumenides*, &c. Schütz's note. The recessions of the chorus were termed μεταναστάσεις. There is another instance in the Ajax, v 814. *Ed.*

this was not felt by the audience, who, in imagination stretched minutes into hours, while they listened to the lofty narrative odes of the chorus which almost entirely filled up the interspace. Another fact deserves attention here, namely, that regularly on the Greek stage a drama, or acted story, consisted in reality of three dramas, called together a trilogy, and performed consecutively in the course of one day. Now you may conceive a tragedy of Shakspeare's as a trilogy connected in one single representation. Divide Lear into three parts, and each would be a play with the ancients; or take the three Æschylean dramas of Agamemnon, and divide them into, or call them, as many acts, and they together would be one play. The first act would comprise the usurpation of Ægisthus, and the murder of Agamemnon; the second, the revenge of Orestes, and the murder of his mother; and the third, the penance and absolution of Orestes;—occupying a period of twenty-two years.

The stage in Shakspeare's time was a naked room with a blanket for a curtain; but he made it a field for monarchs. That law of unity, which has its foundations, not in the factitious necessity of custom, but in nature itself, the unity of feeling, is every where and at all times observed by Shakspeare in his plays. Read Romeo and Juliet;—all is youth and spring;—youth with its follies, its virtues, its precipitancies;—spring with its odours, its flowers, and its transiency; it is one and the same feeling that commences, goes through, and ends the play. The old men, the Capulets and the Montagues, are not common old men; they have an eagerness, a heartiness, a vehemence, the effect of spring; with Romeo, his change of passion, his sudden marriage, and his rash death, are all the effects of youth;—whilst in Juliet love has all that is tender and melancholy in the nightingale, all that is voluptuous in the rose, with whatever is sweet in the freshness of spring; but it ends with a long deep sigh like the last breeze of the Italian evening. This unity of feeling and character pervades every drama of Shakspeare.

It seems to me that his plays are distinguished from those of all other dramatic poets by the following characteristics:

1. Expectation in preference to surprise. It is like the true reading of the passage;—'God said, Let there be light,

and there was *light;*'—not there *was* light. As the feeling with which we startle at a shooting star compared with that of watching the sunrise at the pre-established moment, such and so low is surprise compared with expectation.

2. Signal adherence to the great law of nature, that all opposites tend to attract and temper each other. Passion in Shakspeare generally displays libertinism, but involves morality; and if there are exceptions to this, they are, independently of their intrinsic value, all of them indicative of individual character, and, like the farewell admonitions of a parent, have an end beyond the parental relation. Thus the Countess's beautiful precepts to Bertram, by elevating her character, raise that of Helena her favorite, and soften down the point in her which Shakspeare does not mean us not to see, but to see and to forgive, and at length to justify. And so it is in Polonius, who is the personified memory of wisdom no longer actually possessed. This admirable character is always misrepresented on the stage. Shakspeare never intended to exhibit him as a buffoon; for although it was natural that Hamlet,—a young man of fire and genius, detesting formality, and disliking Polonius on political grounds, as imagining that he had assisted his uncle in his usurpation,—should express himself satirically,—yet this must not be taken as exactly the poet's conception of him. In Polonius a certain induration of character had arisen from long habits of business; but take his advice to Laertes, and Ophelia's reverence for his memory, and we shall see that he was meant to be represented as a statesman somewhat past his faculties,—his recollections of life all full of wisdom, and showing a knowledge of human nature, whilst what immediately takes place before him, and escapes from him, is indicative of weakness.

But as in Homer all the deities are in armour, even Venus; so in Shakspeare all the characters are strong. Hence real folly and dulness are made by him the vehicles of wisdom. There is no difficulty for one being a fool to imitate a fool; but to be, remain, and speak like a wise man and a great wit, and yet so as to give a vivid representation of a veritable fool,—*hic labor, hoc opus est.* A drunken constable is not uncommon, nor hard to draw; but see and examine what goes to make up a Dogberry.

3. Keeping at all times in the high road of life. Shak-

speare has no innocent adulteries, no interesting incests, no virtuous vice;—he never renders that amiable which religion and reason alike teach us to detest, or clothes impurity in the garb of virtue, like Beaumont and Fletcher, the Kotzebues of the day. Shakspeare's fathers are roused by ingratitude, his husbands stung by unfaithfulness; in him, in short, the affections are wounded in those points in which all may, nay, must, feel. Let the morality of Shakspeare be contrasted with that of the writers of his own, or the succeeding, age, or of those of the present day, who boast their superiority in this respect. No one can dispute that the result of such a comparison is altogether in favour of Shakspeare;—even the letters of women of high rank in his age were often coarser than his writings. If he occasionally disgusts a keen sense of delicacy, he never injures the mind; he neither excites, nor flatters, passion, in order to degrade the subject of it; he does not use the faulty thing for a faulty purpose, nor carries on warfare against virtue, by causing wickedness to appear as no wickedness, through the medium of a morbid sympathy with the unfortunate. In Shakspeare vice never walks as in twilight; nothing is purposely out of its place;—he inverts not the order of nature and propriety,—does not make every magistrate a drunkard or glutton, nor every poor man meek, humane, and temperate; he has no benevolent butchers, nor any sentimental rat-catchers.

4. Independence of the dramatic interest on the plot. The interest in the plot is always in fact on account of the characters, not *vice versa*, as in almost all other writers; the plot is a mere canvass and no more. Hence arises the true justification of the same stratagem being used in regard to Benedict and Beatrice,—the vanity in each being alike. Take away from the Much Ado About Nothing all that which is not indispensable to the plot, either as having little to do with it, or, at best, like Dogberry and his comrades, forced into the service, when any other less ingeniously absurd watchmen and night-constables would have answered the mere necessities of the action;—take away Benedict, Beatrice, Dogberry, and the reaction of the former on the character of Hero,—and what will remain? In other writers the main agent of the plot is always the prominent character; in Shakspeare it is so, or is not so, as the character is in itself calculated, or not calculated, to

form the plot. Don John is the main-spring of the plot of this play; but he is merely shown and then withdrawn.

5. Independence of the interest on the story as the ground-work of the plot. Hence Shakspeare never took the trouble of inventing stories. It was enough for him to select from those that had been already invented or recorded such as had one or other, or both, of two recommendations, namely, suitableness to his particular purpose, and their being parts of popular tradition,—names of which we had often heard, and of their fortunes, and as to which all we wanted was, to see the man himself. So it is just the man himself, the Lear, the Shylock, the Richard, that Shakspeare makes us for the first time acquainted with. Omit the first scene in Lear, and yet every thing will remain; so the first and second scenes in the Merchant of Venice. Indeed it is universally true.

6. Interfusion of the lyrical—that which in its very essence is poetical—not only with the dramatic, as in the plays of Metastasio, where at the end of the scene comes the *aria* as the *exit* speech of the character,—but also in and through the dramatic. Songs in Shakspeare are introduced as songs only, just as songs are in real life, beautifully as some of them are characteristic of the person who has sung or called for them, as Desdemona's 'Willow,' and Ophelia's wild snatches, and the sweet carollings in As You Like It. But the whole of the Midsummer Night's Dream is one continued specimen of the dramatized lyrical. And observe how exquisitely the dramatic of Hotspur;—

> Marry, and I'm glad on't with all my heart;
> I'd rather be a kitten and cry—mew, &c.

melts away into the lyric of Mortimer;—

> I understand thy looks: that pretty Welsh
> Which thou pourest down from these swelling heavens,
> I am too perfect in, &c.
>
> Henry IV. part i. act iii. sc. i.

7. The characters of the *dramatis personæ*, like those in real life, are to be inferred by the reader;—they are not told to him. And it is well worth remarking that Shakspeare's characters, like those in real life, are very commonly misunderstood, and almost always understood by different persons in different ways. The causes are

the same in either case. If you take only what the friends of the character say, you may be deceived, and still more so, if that which his enemies say; nay, even the character himself sees himself through the medium of his character, and not exactly as he is. Take all together, not omitting a shrewd hint from the clown or the fool, and perhaps your impression will be right; and you may know whether you have in fact discovered the poet's own idea, by all the speeches receiving light from it, and attesting its reality by reflecting it.

Lastly, in Shakspeare the heterogeneous is united, as it is in nature. You must not suppose a pressure or passion always acting on or in the character!—passion in Shakspeare is that by which the individual is distinguished from others, not that which makes a different kind of him. Shakspeare followed the main march of the human affections. He entered into no analysis of the passions or faiths of men, but assured himself that such and such passions and faiths were grounded in our common nature, and not in the mere accidents of ignorance or disease. This is an important consideration, and constitutes our Shakspeare the morning star, the guide and the pioneer, of true philosophy.

Outline of
AN INTRODUCTORY LECTURE UPON SHAKSPEARE.

Of that species of writing termed tragi-comedy, much has been produced and doomed to the shelf. Shakspeare's comic are continually re-acting upon his tragic characters. Lear, wandering amidst the tempest, has all his feelings of distress increased by the overflowings of the wild wit of the Fool, as vinegar poured upon wounds exacerbates their pain. Thus even his comic humour tends to the developement of tragic passion.

The next characteristic of Shakspeare is his keeping at all times in the high road of life, &c.[1] Another evidence of his exquisite judgment is, that he seizes hold of popular

[1] See the foregoing Essay. S. C.

tales; Lear and the Merchant of Venice were popular tales, but are so excellently managed, that both are the representations of men in all countries and of all times.

His dramas do not arise absolutely out of some one extraordinary circumstance, the scenes may stand independently of any such one connecting incident, as faithful representations of men and manners. In his mode of drawing characters there are no pompous descriptions of a man by himself; his character is to be drawn, as in real life, from the whole course of the play, or out of the mouths of his enemies or friends. This may be exemplified in Polonius, whose character has been often misrepresented. Shakspeare never intended him for a buffoon, &c.[1]

Another excellence of Shakspeare in which no writer equals him, is in the language of nature. So correct is it, that we can see ourselves in every page. The style and manner have also that felicity, that not a sentence can be read, without its being discovered if it is Shaksperian. In observation of living characters—of landlords and postilions Fielding has great excellence; but in drawing from his own heart, and depicting that species of character, which no observation could teach, he failed in comparison with Richardson, who perpetually places himself, as it were, in a day-dream. Shakspeare excels in both. Witness the accuracy of character in Juliet's Name; while for the great characters of Iago, Othello, Hamlet, Richard III., to which he could never have seen any thing similar, he seems invariably to have asked himself, How should I act or speak in such circumstances? His comic characters are also peculiar. A drunken constable was not uncommon; but he makes folly a vehicle for wit, as in Dogberry: every thing is a *sub-stratum* on which his genius can erect the mightiest superstructure.

To distinguish that which is legitimate in Shakspeare from what does not belong to him, we must observe his varied images symbolical of novel truth, thrusting by, and seeming to trip up each other, from an impetuosity of thought, producing a flowing metre and seldom closing with the line. In Pericles, a play written fifty years before, but altered by Shakspeare, his additions may be recognised

[1] See the Notes on Hamlet, which contain the same general view of the character of Polonius. As there are a few additional hints in the present report, I have thought it worth printing. S. C.

to half a line, from the metre, which has the same perfection in the flowing continuity of interchangeable metrical pauses in his earliest plays, as in Love's Labour's Lost.[1]

Lastly contrast his *morality* with the writers of his own or of the succeeding age, &c.[2] If a man speak injuriously of our friend, our vindication of him is naturally warm. Shakspeare has been accused of profaneness. I for my part have acquired from perusal of him, a habit of looking into my own heart, and am confident that Shakspeare is an author of all others the most calculated to make his readers better as well as wiser.

Shakspeare, possessed of wit, humour, fancy and imagination, built up an outward world from the stores within his mind, as the bee finds a hive [3] from a thousand sweets gathered from a thousand flowers. He was not only a great poet, but a great philosopher. Richard III., Iago, and Falstaff are men who reverse the order of things, who place intellect at the head, whereas it ought to follow, like Geometry, to prove and to confirm. No man, either hero or saint, ever acted from an unmixed motive; for let him do what he will rightly, still Conscience whispers "it is your duty." Richard, laughing at conscience and sneering at religion, felt a confidence in his intellect, which urged him to commit the most horrid crimes, because he felt himself, although inferior in form and shape, superior to those around him; he felt he possessed a power, which they had not. Iago, on the same principle, conscious of superior intellect, gave scope to his envy, and hesitated not to ruin a gallant, open and generous friend in the moment of felicity, because he was not promoted as he expected. Othello was superior in place, but Iago felt him to be inferior in intellect, and unrestrained by conscience, trampled upon him.—Falstaff, not a degraded man of genius, like Burns, but a man of degraded genius, with the same consciousness of superiority to his companions, fastened himself on a young Prince,

[1] Lamb, comparing Fletcher with Shakspeare, writes thus: "Fletcher's ideas moved slow; his versification, though sweet, is tedious, it stops at every turn; he lays line upon line, making up one after the other, adding image to image so deliberately, that we see their junctures. Shakspeare mingles every thing, runs line into line, embarrasses sentences and metaphors; before one idea has burst its shell, another is hatched and clamorous for disclosure." *Characters of Dram. Writers, contemp. with Shakspeare.*

[2] See the foregoing Essay.

[3] There must have been some mistake in the report of this sentence, unless there was a momentary lapse of mind on the part of the lecturer.

to prove how much his influence on an heir apparent would exceed that of a statesman. With this view he hesitated not to adopt the most contemptible of all characters, that of an open and professed liar: even his sensuality was subservient to his intellect; for he appeared to drink sack, that he might have occasion to show off his wit. One thing, however, worthy of observation, is the perpetual contrast of labour in Falstaff to produce wit, with the ease with which Prince Henry parries his shafts; and the final contempt which such a character deserves and receives from the young king, when Falstaff exhibits the struggle of inward determination with an outward show of humility.

ORDER OF SHAKSPEARE'S PLAYS.

VARIOUS attempts have been made to arrange the plays of Shakspeare, each according to its priority in time, by proofs derived from external documents. How unsuccessful these attempts have been might easily be shewn, not only from the widely different results arrived at by men, all deeply versed in the black-letter books, old plays, pamphlets, manuscript records and catalogues of that age, but also from the fallacious and unsatisfactory nature of the facts and assumptions on which the evidence rests. In that age, when the press was chiefly occupied with controversial or practical divinity,—when the law, the church and the state engrossed all honour and respectability,—when a degree of disgrace, *levior quædam infamiæ macula*, was attached to the publication of poetry, and even to have sported with the Muse, as a private relaxation, was supposed to be—a venial fault, indeed, yet — something beneath the gravity of a wise man,—when the professed poets were so poor, that the very expenses of the press demanded the liberality of some wealthy individual, so that two thirds of Spenser's poetic works, and those most highly praised by his learned admirers and friends, remained for many years in manuscript, and in manuscript perished,—when the amateurs of the stage were comparatively few, and therefore for the greater part more or less known to each other,—when we know that the plays of Shakspeare,

both during and after his life, were the property of the stage, and published by the players, doubtless according to their notions of acceptability with the visitants of the theatre,—in such an age, and under such circumstances, can an allusion or reference to any drama or poem in the publication of a contemporary be received as conclusive evidence, that such drama or poem had at that time been published? Or, further, can the priority of publication itself prove any thing in favour of actually prior composition?

We are tolerably certain, indeed, that the Venus and Adonis, and the Rape of Lucrece, were his two earliest poems, and though not printed until 1593, in the twenty-ninth year of his age, yet there can be little doubt that they had remained by him in manuscript many years. For Mr. Malone has made it highly probable, that he had commenced a writer for the stage in 1591, when he was twenty-seven years old, and Shakspeare himself assures us that the Venus and Adonis was the first heir of his invention.[1]

Baffled, then, in the attempt to derive any satisfaction from outward documents, we may easily stand excused if we turn our researches towards the internal evidences furnished by the writings themselves, with no other positive *data* than the known facts, that the Venus and Adonis was printed in 1593, the Rape of Lucrece in 1594, and that the Romeo and Juliet had appeared in 1595,—and with no other presumptions than that the poems, his very first productions, were written many years earlier,—(for who can believe that Shakspeare could have remained to his twenty-ninth or thirtieth year without attempting poetic composition of any kind?)—and that between these and Romeo and Juliet there had intervened one or two other dramas, or the chief materials, at least, of them, although they may very possibly have appeared after the success of the Romeo and Juliet and some other circumstances had given the poet an authority with the proprietors, and created a prepossession in his favour with the theatrical audiences.

[1] But if the first heir of my invention prove deformed, I shall be sorry it had so noble a godfather, &c.

Dedication of the V. and A. to Lord Southampton.

CLASSIFICATION ATTEMPTED, 1802.

First Epoch.

The London Prodigal.
Cromwell.
Henry VI., three parts, first edition.
The old King John.
Edward III.
The old Taming of the Shrew.
Pericles.

All these are transition-works, *Uebergangswerke;* not his, yet of him.

Second Epoch.

All's Well That Ends Well;—but afterwards worked up afresh (*umgearbeitet*), especially Parolles.
The Two Gentlemen of Verona; a sketch.
Romeo and Juliet; first draft of it.

Third Epoch

rises into the full, although youthful, Shakspeare; it was the negative period of his perfection.

Love's Labour's Lost.
Twelfth Night.
As You Like It.
Midsummer Night's Dream.
Richard II.
Henry IV. and V.
Henry VIII.; *Gelegenheitsgedicht.*
Romeo and Juliet, as at present.
Merchant of Venice.

Fourth Epoch.

Much Ado About Nothing.
Merry Wives of Windsor; first edition.
Henry VI.; *rifacimento.*

Fifth Epoch.

The period of beauty was now past; and that of δεινότης and grandeur succeeds.

Lear.
Macbeth.

Hamlet.
Timon of Athens; an after vibration of Hamlet.
Troilus and Cressida; *Uebergang in die Ironie.*
The Roman Plays.
King John, as at present.
Merry Wives of Windsor. } *umgearbeitet.*
Taming of the Shrew. }
Measure for Measure.
Othello.
Tempest.
Winter's Tale.
Cymbeline.

CLASSIFICATION ATTEMPTED, 1810.

Shakspeare's earliest dramas I take to be,

Love's Labour's Lost.
All's Well That Ends Well.
Comedy of Errors.
Romeo and Juliet.

In the second class I reckon

Midsummer Night's Dream.
As You Like It.
Tempest.
Twelfth Night.

In the third, as indicating a greater energy—not merely of poetry, but—of all the world of thought, yet still with some of the growing pains. and the awkwardness of growth, I place

Troilus and Cressida.
Cymbeline.
Merchant of Venice.
Much Ado About Nothing.
Taming of the Shrew.

In the fourth, I place the plays containing the greatest characters;

Macbeth.
Lear.
Hamlet.
Othello.

And lastly, the historic dramas, in order to be able to show

my reasons for rejecting some whole plays, and very many scenes in others.

CLASSIFICATION ATTEMPTED, 1819.

I think Shakspeare's earliest dramatic attempt—perhaps even prior in conception to the Venus and Adonis, and planned before he left Stratford—was Love's Labour's Lost. Shortly afterwards I suppose Pericles and certain scenes in Jeronymo to have been produced; and in the same epoch, I place the Winter's Tale and Cymbeline, differing from the Pericles by the entire *rifacimento* of it, when Shakspeare's celebrity as poet, and his interest, no less than his influence as manager, enabled him to bring forward the laid by labours of his youth. The example of Titus Andronicus, which, as well as Jeronymo, was most popular in Shakspeare's first epoch, had led the young dramatist to the lawless mixture of dates and manners. In this same epoch I should place the Comedy of Errors, remarkable as being the only specimen of poetical farce in our language, that is, intentionally such; so that all the distinct kinds of drama, which might be educed *a priori*, have their representatives in Shakspeare's works. I say intentionally such; for many of Beaumont and Fletcher's plays, and the greater part of Ben Jonson's comedies are farce-plots. I add All's Well that Ends Well, originally intended as the counterpart of Love's Labour's Lost, Taming of the Shrew, Midsummer Night's Dream, Much Ado About Nothing, and Romeo and Juliet.

Second Epoch.

Richard II.
King John.
Henry VI.,—*rifacimento* only.
Richard III.

Third Epoch.

Henry IV.
Henry V.
Merry Wives of Windsor.
Henry VIII.,—a sort of historical masque, or show play.

Fourth Epoch

gives all the graces and facilities of a genius in full possession and habitual exercise of power, and peculiarly of the feminine, the *lady's* character.

Tempest.
As You Like It.
Merchant of Venice.
Twelfth Night.

and, finally at its very point of culmination,—

Lear.
Hamlet.
Macbeth.
Othello.

Last Epoch,

when the energies of intellect in the cycle of genius were, though in a rich and more potentiated form, becoming predominant over passion and creative self-manifestation.

Measure for Measure.
Timon of Athens.
Coriolanus.
Julius Cæsar.
Antony and Cleopatra.
Troilus and Cressida.

Merciful, wonder-making Heaven! what a man was this Shakspeare! Myriad-minded, indeed, he was.

NOTES ON THE TEMPEST.

THERE is a sort of improbability with which we are shocked in dramatic representation, not less than in a narrative of real life. Consequently, there must be rules respecting it; and as rules are nothing but means to an end previously ascertained—(inattention to which simple truth has been the occasion of all the pedantry of the French school),—we must first determine what the immediate end or object of the drama is. And here, as I have previously remarked, I find two extremes of critical decision;—the French, which evidently presupposes that a perfect delusion is to be aimed at,—an opinion which needs no fresh confutation; and the exact opposite to it, brought forward by Dr.

Johnson, who supposes the auditors throughout in the full reflective knowledge of the contrary. In evincing the impossibility of delusion, he makes no sufficient allowance for an intermediate state, which I have before distinguished by the term, illusion, and have attempted to illustrate its quality and character by reference to our mental state, when dreaming. In both cases we simply do not judge the imagery to be unreal; there is a negative reality, and no more. Whatever, therefore, tends to prevent the mind from placing itself, or being placed, gradually in that state in which the images have such negative reality for the auditor, destroys this illusion, and is dramatically improbable.

Now the production of this effect—a sense of improbability—will depend on the degree of excitement in which the mind is supposed to be. Many things would be intolerable in the first scene of a play, that would not at all interrupt our enjoyment in the height of the interest, when the narrow cockpit may be made to hold

> The vasty field of France, or we may cram
> Within its wooden O the very casques
> That did affright the air at Agincourt.

Again, on the other hand, many obvious improbabilities will be endured, as belonging to the groundwork of the story rather than to the drama itself, in the first scenes, which would disturb or disentrance us from all illusion in the acme of our excitement; as for instance, Lear's division of his kingdom, and the banishment of Cordelia.

But, although the other excellences of the drama besides this dramatic probability, as unity of interest, with distinctness and subordination of the characters, and appropriateness of style, are all, so far as they tend to increase the inward excitement, means towards accomplishing the chief end, that of producing and supporting this willing illusion,—yet they do not on that account cease to be ends themselves; and we must remember that, as such, they carry their own justification with them, as long as they do not contravene or interrupt the total illusion. It is not even always, or of necessity, an objection to them, that they prevent the illusion from rising to as great a height as it might otherwise have attained;—it is enough that they are simply compatible with as high a

degree of it as is requisite for the purpose. Nay, upon particular occasions, a palpable improbability may be hazarded by a great genius for the express purpose of keeping down the interest of a merely instrumental scene, which would otherwise make too great an impression for the harmony of the entire illusion. Had the panorama been invented in the time of Pope Leo X., Raffael would still, I doubt not, have smiled in contempt at the regret, that the broom-twigs and scrubby bushes at the back of some of his grand pictures were not as probable trees as those in the exhibition.

The Tempest is a specimen of the purely romantic drama, in which the interest is not historical, or dependent upon fidelity of portraiture, or the natural connexion of events,—but is a birth of the imagination, and rests only on the coaptation and union of the elements granted to, or assumed by, the poet. It is a species of drama which owes no allegiance to time or space, and in which, therefore, errors of chronology and geography—no mortal sins in any species—are venial faults, and count for nothing. It addresses itself entirely to the imaginative faculty; and although the illusion may be assisted by the effect on the senses of the complicated scenery and decorations of modern times, yet this sort of assistance is dangerous. For the principal and only genuine excitement ought to come from within,—from the moved and sympathetic imagination; whereas, where so much is addressed to the mere external senses of seeing and hearing, the spiritual vision is apt to languish, and the attraction from without will withdraw the mind from the proper and only legitimate interest which is intended to spring from within.

The romance opens with a busy scene admirably appropriate to the kind of drama, and giving, as it were, the key-note to the whole harmony. It prepares and initiates the excitement required for the entire piece, and yet does not demand any thing from the spectators, which their previous habits had not fitted them to understand. It is the bustle of a tempest, from which the real horrors are abstracted;—therefore it is poetical, though not in strictness natural—(the distinction to which I have so often alluded)—and is purposely restrained from concentering the interest on itself, but used merely as an induction or tuning for what is to follow.

In the second scene, Prospero's speeches, till the entrance of Ariel, contain the finest example, I remember, of retrospective narration for the purpose of exciting immediate interest, and putting the audience in possession of all the information necessary for the understanding of the plot.[1] Observe, too, the perfect probability of the moment chosen by Prospero (the very Shakspeare himself, as it were, of the tempest) to open out the truth to his daughter, his own romantic bearing, and how completely any thing that might have been disagreeable to us in the magician, is reconciled and shaded in the humanity and natural feelings of the father. In the very first speech of Miranda the simplicity and tenderness of her character are at once laid open;—it would have been lost in direct contact with the agitation of the first scene. The opinion once prevailed, but, happily, is now abandoned, that Fletcher alone wrote for women;—the truth is, that with very few, and those partial, exceptions, the female characters in the plays of Beaumont and Fletcher are, when of the light kind, not decent; when heroic, complete viragos. But in Shakspeare all the elements of womanhood are holy, and there is the sweet, yet dignified feeling of all that *continuates* society, as sense of ancestry and of sex, with a purity unassailable by sophistry, because it rests not in the analytic processes, but in that same equipoise of the faculties, during which the feelings are representative of all past experience,—not of the individual only, but of all those by whom she has been educated, and their predecessors even up to the first mother that lived. Shakspeare saw that the want of prominence, which Pope notices for sarcasm, was the blessed beauty of the woman's character, and knew that it arose not from any deficiency, but from the more exquisite harmony of all the parts of the moral being constituting one living total of head and heart. He has drawn it, indeed, in all its distinctive energies of faith, patience, constancy, forti-

[1] *Pro.* Mark his condition, and th' event; then tell me,
If this might be a brother.
Mira. I should sin,
To think but nobly of my grandmother;
Good wombs have bore bad sons.
Pro. Now the condition, &c.

Theobald has a note upon this passage, and suggests that Shakspeare placed it thus:—

Pro. Good wombs have bore bad sons,—
Now the condition.

Mr. Coleridge writes in the margin: 'I cannot but believe that Theobald is quite right.'—*Ed.*

tude,—shown in all of them as following the heart, which gives its results by a nice tact and happy intuition, without the intervention of the discursive faculty, sees all things in and by the light of the affections, and errs, if it ever err, in the exaggerations of love alone. In all the Shakspearian women there is essentially the same foundation and principle; the distinct individuality and variety are merely the result of the modification of circumstances, whether in Miranda the maiden, in Imogen the wife, or in Katherine the queen.

But to return. The appearance and characters of the super or ultra-natural servants are finely contrasted. Ariel has in every thing the airy tint which gives the name; and it is worthy of remark that Miranda is never directly brought into comparison with Ariel, lest the natural and human of the one and the supernatural of the other should tend to neutralize each other; Caliban, on the other hand, is all earth, all condensed and gross in feelings and images; he has the dawnings of understanding without reason or the moral sense, and in him, as in some brute animals, this advance to the intellectual faculties, without the moral sense, is marked by the appearance of vice. For it is in the primacy of the moral being only that man is truly human; in his intellectual powers he is certainly approached by the brutes, and, man's whole system duly considered, those powers cannot be considered other than means to an end, that is, to morality.

In this scene, as it proceeds, is displayed the impression made by Ferdinand and Miranda on each other; it is love at first sight;—

> at the first sight
> They have chang'd eyes:—

and it appears to me, that in all cases of real love, it is at one moment that it takes place. That moment may have been prepared by previous esteem, admiration, or even affection,—yet love seems to require a momentary act of volition, by which a tacit bond of devotion is imposed,—a bond not to be thereafter broken without violating what should be sacred in our nature. How finely is the true Shakspearian scene contrasted with Dryden's vulgar alteration of it in which a mere ludicrous psychological experiment, as it were, is tried—displaying nothing but

indelicacy without passion. Prospero's interruption of the courtship has often seemed to me to have no sufficient motive; still his alleged reason—

lest too light winning
Make the prize light—

is enough for the ethereal connections of the romantic imagination, although it would not be so for the historical.[1] The whole courting scene, indeed, in the beginning of the third act, between the lovers, is a masterpiece; and the first dawn of disobedience in the mind of Miranda to the command of her father is very finely drawn, so as to seem the working of the Scriptural command *Thou shalt leave father and mother*, &c. O! with what exquisite purity this scene is conceived and executed! Shakspeare may sometimes be gross, but I boldly say that he is always moral and modest. Alas! in this our day decency of manners is preserved at the expense of morality of heart, and delicacies for vice are allowed, whilst grossness against it is hypocritically, or at least morbidly, condemned.

In this play are admirably sketched the vices generally accompanying a low degree of civilization; and in the first scene of the second act Shakspeare has, as in many other places, shown the tendency in bad men to indulge in scorn and contemptuous expressions, as a mode of getting rid of their own uneasy feelings of inferiority to the good, and also, by making the good ridiculous, of rendering the transition of others to wickedness easy. Shakspeare never puts habitual scorn into the mouths of other than bad men, as here in the instances of Antonio and Sebastian. The scene of the intended assassination of Alonzo and Gonzalo is an exact counterpart of the scene between Macbeth and his lady, only pitched in a lower key throughout, as designed to be frustrated and concealed, and exhibiting the same profound management in the manner of familiarizing a mind, not immediately recipient, to the suggestion of guilt, by associating the proposed crime with something ludicrous or out of place,—something not habitually matter of reverence. By this kind of sophistry the imagination

1 *Fer.* Yes, faith, and all his Lords, the Duke of Milan,
And his brave son, being twain.

Theobald remarks that no body was lost in the wreck; and yet that no such character is introduced in the fable, as the Duke of Milan's son. Mr. C. notes: 'Must not Ferdinand have believed he was lost in the fleet that the tempest scattered?'—*Ed.*

and fancy are first bribed to contemplate the suggested act, and at length to become acquainted with it. Observe how the effect of this scene is heightened by contrast with another counterpoint of it in low life,—that between the conspirators Stephano, Caliban, and Trinculo in the second scene of the third act, in which there are the same essential characteristics.

In this play and in this scene of it are also shown the springs of the vulgar in politics,—of that kind of politics which is inwoven with human nature. In his treatment of this subject, wherever it occurs, Shakspeare is quite peculiar. In other writers we find the particular opinions of the individual; in Massinger it is rank republicanism; in Beaumont and Fletcher even *jure divino* principles are carried to excess;—but Shakspeare never promulgates any party tenets. He is always the philosopher and the moralist, but at the same time with a profound veneration for all the established institutions of society, and for those classes which form the permanent elements of the state—especially never introducing a professional character, as such, otherwise than as respectable. If he must have any name, he should be styled a philosophical aristocrat, delighting in those hereditary institutions which have a tendency to bind one age to another, and in that distinction of ranks, of which, although few may be in possession, all enjoy the advantages. Hence, again, you will observe the good nature with which he seems always to make sport with the passions and follies of a mob, as with an irrational animal. He is never angry with it, but hugely content with holding up its absurdities to its face; and sometimes you may trace a tone of almost affectionate superiority, something like that in which a father speaks of the rogueries of a child. See the good-humoured way in which he describes Stephano passing from the most licentious freedom to absolute despotism over Trinculo and Caliban. The truth is, Shakspeare's characters are all *genera* intensely individualized; the results of meditation, of which observation supplied the drapery and the colours necessary to combine them with each other. He had virtually surveyed all the great component powers and impulses of human nature,—had seen that their different combinations and subordinations were in fact the individualizers of men, and showed how their harmony was produced by reciprocal disproportions

of excess or deficiency. The language in which these truths are expressed was not drawn from any set fashion, but from the profoundest depths of his moral being, and is therefore for all ages.

LOVE'S LABOUR'S LOST.

THE characters in this play are either impersonated out of Shakspeare's own multiformity by imaginative self-position or out of such as a country town and schoolboy's observation might supply,—the curate, the schoolmaster, the Armado, (who even in my time was not extinct in the cheaper inns of North Wales) and so on. The satire is chiefly on follies of words. Biron and Rosaline are evidently the pre-existent state of Benedict and Beatrice, and so, perhaps, is Boyet of Lafeu, and Costard of the Tapster in Measure for Measure; and the frequency of the rhymes, the sweetness as well as the smoothness of the metre, and the number of acute and fancifully illustrated aphorisms, are all as they ought to be in a poet's youth. True genius begins by generalizing and condensing; it ends in realizing and expanding. It first collects the seeds.

Yet if this juvenile drama had been the only one extant of our Shakspeare, and we possessed the tradition only of his riper works, or accounts of them in writers who had not even mentioned this play,—how many of Shakspeare's characteristic features might we not still have discovered in Love's Labour's Lost, though as in a portrait taken of him in his boyhood?

I can never sufficiently admire the wonderful activity of thought throughout the whole of the first scene of the play, rendered natural, as it is, by the choice of the characters, and the whimsical determination on which the drama is founded. A whimsical determination certainly; —yet not altogether so very improbable to those who are conversant in the history of the middle ages, with their Courts of Love, and all that lighter drapery of chivalry, which engaged even mighty kings with a sort of serio-comic interest, and may well be supposed to have occupied more completely the smaller princes, at a time when the noble's or prince's court contained the only theatre of the domain

or principality. This sort of story, too, was admirably suited to Shakspeare's times, when the English court was still the foster-mother of the state, and the muses; and when, in consequence, the courtiers, and men of rank and fashion, affected a display of wit, point, and sententious observation, that would be deemed intolerable at present, —but in which a hundred years of controversy, involving every great political, and every dear domestic, interest, had trained all but the lowest classes to participate. Add to this the very style of the sermons of the time, and the eagerness of the Protestants to distinguish themselves by long and frequent preaching, and it will be found that, from the reign of Henry VIII. to the abdication of James II. no country ever received such a national education as England.

Hence the comic matter chosen in the first instance is a ridiculous imitation or apery of this constant striving after logical precision, and subtle opposition of thoughts, together with a making the most of every conception or image, by expressing it under the least expected property belonging to it, and this, again, rendered specially absurd by being applied to the most current subjects and occurrences. The phrases and modes of combination in argument were caught by the most ignorant from the custom of the age, and their ridiculous misapplication of them is most amusingly exhibited in Costard; whilst examples suited only to the gravest propositions and impersonations, or apostrophes to abstract thoughts impersonated, which are in fact the natural language only of the most vehement agitations of the mind, are adopted by the coxcombry of Armado as mere artifices of ornament.

The same kind of intellectual action is exhibited in a more serious and elevated strain in many other parts of this play. Biron's speech at the end of the fourth act is an excellent specimen of it. It is logic clothed in rhetoric; —but observe how Shakspeare, in his two-fold being of poet and philosopher, avails himself of it to convey profound truths in the most lively images,—the whole remaining faithful to the character supposed to utter the lines, and the expressions themselves constituting a further developement of that character:—

> **Other slow arts entirely keep the brain:**
> **And therefore finding barren practisers,**

Scarce shew a harvest of their heavy toil :
But love, first learned in a lady's eyes,
Lives not alone immured in the brain ;
But, with the motion of all elements,
Courses as swift as thought in every power ;
And gives to every power a double power,
Above their functions and their offices.
It adds a precious seeing to the eye,
A lover's eyes will gaze an eagle blind ;
A lover's ear will hear the lowest sound,
When the suspicious tread of theft is stopp'd :
Love's feeling is more soft and sensible,
Than are the tender horns of cockled snails ;
Love's tongue proves dainty Bacchus gross in taste ;
For valour, is not love a Hercules,
Still climbing trees in the Hesperides ?
Subtle as Sphinx ; as sweet and musical,
As bright Apollo's lute, strung with his hair ;
And when love speaks, the voice of all the gods
Makes heaven drowsy with the harmony.
Never durst poet touch a pen to write,
Until his ink were temper'd with love's sighs ;
O, then his lines would ravish savage ears,
And plant in tyrants mild humility.
From women's eyes this doctrine I derive :
They sparkle still the right Promethean fire ;
They are the books, the arts, the academes,
That shew, contain, and nourish all the world ;
Else, none at all in aught proves excellent ;
Then fools you were these women to forswear ;
Or, keeping what is sworn, you will prove fools.
For wisdom's sake, a word that all men love ;
Or for love's sake, a word that loves all men ;
Or for men's sake, the authors of these women ;
Or women's sake, by whom we men are men ;
Let us once lose our oaths, to find ourselves,
Or else we lose ourselves to keep our oaths :
It is religion, to be thus forsworn :
For charity itself fulfils the law :
And who can sever love from charity ?—

This is quite a study ;—sometimes you see this youthful god of poetry connecting disparate thoughts purely by means of resemblances in the words expressing them,—a thing in character in lighter comedy, especially of that kind in which Shakspeare delights, namely, the purposed display of wit, though sometimes, too, disfiguring his graver scenes ;—but more often you may see him doubling the natural connection or order of logical consequence in the thoughts by the introduction of an artificial and

sought-for resemblance in the words, as, for instance, in the third line of the play,—

> And then grace us in the disgrace of death ;—

this being a figure often having its force and propriety, as justified by the law of passion, which, inducing in the mind an unusual activity, seeks for means to waste its superfluity,—when in the highest degree—in lyric repetitions and sublime tautology—(*at her feet he bowed, he fell, he lay down ; at her feet he bowed, he fell ; where he bowed, there he fell down dead*),—and, in lower degrees, in making the words themselves the subjects and materials of that surplus action, and for the same cause that agitates our limbs, and forces our very gestures into a tempest in states of high excitement.

The mere style of narration in Love's Labour's Lost, like that of Ægeon in the first scene of the Comedy of Errors, and of the Captain in the second scene of Macbeth, seems imitated with its defects and its beauties from Sir Philip Sidney ; whose Arcadia, though not then published, was already well-known in manuscript copies, and could hardly have escaped the notice and admiration of Shakspeare as the friend and client of the Earl of Southampton. The chief defect consists in the parentheses and parenthetic thoughts and descriptions, suited neither to the passion of the speaker, nor the purpose of the person to whom the information is to be given, but manifestly betraying the author himself,—not by way of continuous undersong, but—palpably, and so as to show themselves addressed to the general reader. However, it is not unimportant to notice how strong a presumption the diction and allusions of this play afford, that, though Shakspeare's acquirements in the dead languages might not be such as we suppose in a learned education, his habits had, nevertheless, been scholastic, and those of a student. For a young author's first work almost always bespeaks his recent pursuits, and his first observations of life are either drawn from the immediate employments of his youth, and from the characters and images most deeply impressed on his mind in the situations in which those employments had placed him ;—or else they are fixed on such objects and occurrences in the world, as are easily connected with, and seem to bear upon, his studies and the hitherto exclusive subjects

of his meditation. Just as Ben Jonson, who applied himself to the drama after having served in Flanders, fills his earliest plays with true or pretended soldiers, the wrongs and neglects of the former, and the absurd boasts and knavery of their counterfeits. So Lessing's first comedies are placed in the universities, and consist of events and characters conceivable in an academic life.

I will only further remark the sweet and tempered gravity, with which Shakspeare in the end draws the only fitting moral which such a drama afforded. Here Rosaline rises up to the full height of Beatrice :—

Ros. Oft have I heard of you, my lord Biron
Before I saw you, and the world's large tongue
Proclaims you for a man replete with mocks ;
Full of comparisons, and wounding flouts,
Which you on all estates will execute
That lie within the mercy of your wit :
To weed this wormwood from your fruitful brain,
And therewithal, to win me, if you please,
(Without the which I am not to be won,)
You shall this twelvemonth term from day to day
Visit the speechless sick, and still converse
With groaning wretches ; and your talk shall be,
With all the fierce endeavour of your wit,
To enforce the pained impotent to smile.
Biron. To move wild laughter in the throat of death ?
It cannot be ; it is impossible ;
Mirth cannot move a soul in agony.
Ros. Why, that's the way to choke a gibing spirit,
Whose influence is begot of that loose grace,
Which shallow laughing hearers give to fools :
A jest's prosperity lies in the ear
Of him that hears it, never in the tongue
Of him that makes it : then, if sickly ears,
Deaf'd with the clamours of their own dear groans,
Will hear your idle scorns, continue then,
And I will have you, and that fault withal ;
But, if they will not, throw away that spirit,
And I shall find you empty of that fault,
Right joyful of your reformation.

Act v. sc. 2. In Biron's speech to the Princess :

—and, therefore, like the eye,
Full of *straying* shapes, of habits, and of forms—

Either read *stray*, which I prefer ; or throw *full* back to the preceding lines,—

like the eye, full
Of straying shapes, &c.

In the same scene :

> *Biron.* And what to me, my love ? and what to me ?
> *Ros.* You must be purged too, your sins are rank ;
> You are attaint with fault and perjury :
> Therefore, if you my favour mean to get,
> A twelvemonth shall you spend, and never rest,
> But seek the weary beds of people sick.

There can be no doubt, indeed, about the propriety of expunging this speech of Rosaline's ; it soils the very page that retains it. But I do not agree with Warburton and others in striking out the preceding line also It is quite in Biron's character ; and Rosaline not answering it immediately, Dumain takes up the question for him, and, after he and Longaville are answered, Biron, with evident propriety, says ;—

> *Studies* my mistress ? &c.

MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM.

Act i. sc. 1.

> *Her.* O cross ! too high to be enthrall'd to low—
> *Lys.* Or else misgrafted, in respect of years ;
> *Her.* O spite ! too old to be engag'd to young—
> *Lys.* Or else it stood upon the choice of friends
> *Her.* O hell ! to chuse love by another's eye !

THERE is no authority for any alteration ;—but I never can help feeling how great an improvement it would be, if the two former of Hermia's exclamations were omitted ; —the third and only appropriate one would then become a beauty, and most natural.

Ib. Helena's speech :—

> I will go tell him of fair Hermia's flight, &c.

I am convinced that Shakspeare availed himself of the title of this play in his own mind, and worked upon it as a dream throughout, but especially, and, perhaps, unpleasingly, in this broad determination of ungrateful treachery in Helena, so undisguisedly avowed to herself, and this, too, after the witty cool philosophizing that precedes. The act itself is natural, and the resolve so to act is, I fear, likewise too true a picture of the lax hold which principles

have on a woman's heart, when opposed to, or even separated from, passion and inclination. For women are less hypocrites to their own minds than men are, because in general they feel less proportionate abhorrence of moral evil in and for itself, and more of its outward consequences, as detection, and loss of character than men,—their natures being almost wholly extroitive. Still, however just in itself, the representation of this is not poetical; we shrink from it, and cannot harmonize it with the ideal.

Act ii. sc. 1. Theobald's edition.

Through bush, *through* briar—
* * * * *
Through flood, *through* fire -

What a noble pair of ears this worthy Theobald must have had! The eight amphimacers or cretics,—

Ovĕr hĭll, ōvĕr dāle,
Thōrŏ' būsh, thōrŏ' brĭar,
Ovĕr pārk, ōvĕr pāle,
Thōrŏ' flōōd, thōrŏ' fĭre—

have a delightful effect on the ear in their sweet transition to the trochaic,—

Ĭ dŏ wāndĕr ēv'ry whērĕ
Swĭftĕr thān thĕ mōōnĕs sphērĕ, &c.—

The last words as sustaining the rhyme, must be considered, as in fact they are, trochees in time.

It may be worth while to give some correct examples in English of the principal metrical feet:—

Pyrrhic or Dibrach, ∪ ∪ = *bŏdў, spĭrĭt.*
Tribrach, ∪ ∪ ∪ = *nōbŏdў*, hastily pronounced.
Iambus, ∪ — = *dĕlight.*
Trochee, — ∪ = *lĭghtlў.*
Spondee, — — = *Gōd spake.*

The paucity of spondees in single words in English and, indeed, in the modern languages in general, makes, perhaps, the greatest distinction, metrically considered, between them and the Greek and Latin.

Dactyl, — ∪ ∪ = *mĕrrĭlў.*
Anapæst, ∪ ∪ — = *ă prŏpōs*, or the first three syllables of *cĕrĕmōny.*[1]

[1] Written probably by mistake for "cĕrĕmōnious."

Amphibrachys, ∪ — ∪ = *dēlĭghtfŭl.*
Amphimacer, — ∪ — = *ōvĕr hĭll.*
Antibacchius, ∪ — — = *thĕ Lōrd Gōd.*
Bacchius — — ∪ = *Hēlvēllўn.*
Molossus, — — — = *John James Jones.*

These simple feet may suffice for understanding the metres of Shakspeare, for the greater part at least;—but Milton cannot be made harmoniously intelligible without the composite feet, the Ionics, Pæons, and Epitrites.

Ib. sc. 2. Titania's speech:—(Theobald adopting Warburton's reading.)

> Which she, with pretty and with swimming gate
> *Follying* (her womb then rich with my young squire)
> Would imitate, &c.

Oh! oh! Heaven have mercy on poor Shakspeare, and also on Mr. Warburton's mind's eye!

Act v. sc. 1. Theseus' speech:—(Theobald.)

> And what poor [*willing*] duty cannot do,
> Noble respect takes it in might, not merit.

To my ears it would read far more Shakspearian thus:—

> And what poor duty cannot do, *yet would*,
> Noble respect, &c.

Ib. sc. 2.

> *Puck.* Now the hungry lion roars,
> And the wolf behowls the moon;
> Whilst the heavy ploughman snores
> All with weary task foredone, &c.

Very Anacreon in perfectness, proportion, grace, and spontaneity! So far it is Greek;—but then add, O! what wealth, what wild ranging, and yet what compression and condensation of, English fancy! In truth, there is nothing in Anacreon more perfect than these thirty lines, or half so rich and imaginative. They form a speckless diamond.

COMEDY OF ERRORS.

THE myriad-minded man, our, and all men's, Shakspeare, has in this piece presented us with a legitimate farce in exactest consonance with the philosophical principles and character of farce, as distinguished from comedy and from

entertainments. A proper farce is mainly distinguished from comedy by the license allowed, and even required, in the fable, in order to produce strange and laughable situations. The story need not be probable, it is enough that it is possible. A comedy would scarcely allow even the two Antipholuses; because, although there have been instances of almost indistinguishable likeness in two persons, yet these are mere individual accidents, *casus ludentis naturæ*, and the *verum* will not excuse the *inverisimile*. But farce dares add the two Dromios, and is justified in so doing by the laws of its end and constitution. In a word, farces commence in a postulate, which must be granted.

AS YOU LIKE IT.

Act i. sc. 1.

Oli. What, boy!

Orla. Come, come, elder brother, you are too young in this.

Oli. Wilt thou lay hands on me, villain?

THERE is a beauty here. The word 'boy' naturally provokes and awakens in Orlando the sense of his manly powers; and with the retort of 'elder brother,' he grasps him with firm hands, and makes him feel he is no boy.

Ib. *Oli.* Farewell, good Charles.—Now will I stir this gamester: I hope, I shall see an end of him; for my soul, yet I know not why, hates nothing more than him. Yet he's gentle; never school'd, and yet learn'd; full of noble device; of all sorts enchantingly beloved! and, indeed, so much in the heart of the world, and especially of my own people, who best know him, that I am altogether misprized: but it shall not be so long; this wrestler shall clear all.

This has always appeared to me one of the most un-Shakspearian speeches in all the genuine works of our poet; yet I should be nothing surprized, and greatly pleased, to find it hereafter a fresh beauty, as has so often happened to me with other supposed defects of great men. 1810.

It is too venturous to charge a passage in Shakspeare with want of truth to nature; and yet at first sight this speech of Oliver's expresses truths, which it seems almost impossible that any mind should so distinctly, so livelily, and so voluntarily, have presented to itself, in connection with feelings and intentions so malignant, and so contrary

to those which the qualities expressed would naturally have called forth. But I dare not say that this seeming unnaturalness is not in the nature of an abused wilfulness, when united with a strong intellect. In such characters there is sometimes a gloomy self-gratification in making the absoluteness of the will (*sit pro ratione voluntas!*) evident to themselves by setting the reason and the conscience in full array against it. 1818.

Ib. sc. 2.

Celia. If you saw yourself with *your* eyes, or knew yourself with *your* judgment, the fear of your adventure would counsel you to a more equal enterprize.

Surely it should be '*our* eyes' and '*our* judgment.'

Ib. sc. 3.

Cel. But is all this for your father?
Ros. No, some of it is for *my child's father.*

Theobald restores this as the reading of the older editions. It may be so: but who can doubt that it is a mistake for 'my father's child,' meaning herself? According to Theobald's note, a most indelicate anticipation is put into the mouth of Rosalind without reason;—and besides what a strange thought, and how out of place, and unintelligible!

Act. iv. sc. 2.

Take thou no scorn
To wear the horn, the lusty horn;
It was a crest ere thou wast born.

I question whether there exists a parallel instance of a phrase, that like this of 'horns' is universal in all languages, and yet for which no one has discovered even a plausible origin.

TWELFTH NIGHT.

Act i. sc. 1. Duke's speech:—

—so full of shapes is fancy,
That it alone is high fantastical.

WARBURTON'S alteration of *is* into *in* is needless. 'Fancy' may very well be interpreted 'exclusive affection,' or 'passionate preference.' Thus, bird-fanciers, gentlemen of the fancy, that is, amateurs of boxing, &c. The play of

assimilation,—the meaning one sense chiefly, and yet keeping both senses in view, is perfectly Shakspearian.

Act. ii. sc. 3. Sir Andrew's speech :—

An explanatory note on *Pigrogromitus* would have been more acceptable than Theobald's grand discovery that 'lemon' ought to be 'leman.'

Ib. Sir Toby's speech: (Warburton's note on the Peripatetic philosophy.)

> Shall we rouse the night-owl in a catch, that will draw three souls out of one weaver ?

O genuine, and inimitable (at least I hope so) Warburton! This note of thine, if but one in five millions, would be half a one too much.

Ib. sc. 4.

> *Duke.* My life upon't, young though thou art, thine eye
> Hath stay'd upon some favour that it loves ;
> Hath it not, boy ?
> *Vio.* A little, by your favour.
> *Duke.* What kind of woman is't ?

And yet Viola was to have been presented to Orsino as a eunuch !—Act i. sc. 2. Viola's speech. Either she forgot this, or else she had altered her plan.

Ib.

> *Vio.* A blank, my lord : she never told her love !—
> But let concealment, &c.

After the first line, (of which the last five words should be spoken with, and drop down in, a deep sigh) the actress ought to make a pause ; and then start afresh, from the activity of thought, born of suppressed feelings, and which thought had accumulated during the brief interval, as vital heat under the skin during a dip in cold water.

Ib. sc. 5.

> *Fabian.* Though our silence be drawn from us by *cars*, yet peace.

Perhaps, 'cables.'

Act iii. sc. 1.

> *Clown.* A sentence is but a *cheveril* glove to a good wit. (Theobald's note.)

Theobald's etymology of 'cheveril' is, of course, quite right ;—but he is mistaken in supposing that there were no

such things as gloves of chicken-skin. They were at one time a main article in chirocosmetics.

Act v. sc. 1. Clown's speech :—

> So that, *conclusions to be as kisses*, if your four negatives make your two affirmatives, why, then, the worse for my friends, and the better for my foes.

(Warburton reads 'conclusion to be asked, is.')

Surely Warburton could never have wooed by kisses and won, or he would not have flounder-flatted so just and humorous, nor less pleasing than humorous, an image into so profound a nihility. In the name of love and wonder, do not four kisses make a double affirmative ? The humour lies in the whispered 'No !' and the inviting 'Don't !' with which the maiden's kisses are accompanied, and thence compared to negatives, which by repetition constitute an affirmative.

* ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL.

Act i. sc. 1.

> *Count.* If the living be enemy to the grief, the excess makes it soon mortal.
> *Bert. Madam, I desire your holy wishes.*
> *Laf. How understand we that ?*

BERTRAM and Lafeu, I imagine, both speak together,—Lafeu referring to the Countess's rather obscure remark.

Act ii. sc. 1. (Warburton's note.)

> *King.* —let *higher* Italy
> (Those *'bated*, that inherit but the fall
> Of the last monarchy) see, that you come
> Not to woo honour, but to wed it.

It would be, I own, an audacious and unjustifiable change of the text ; but yet, as a mere conjecture, I venture to suggest 'bastards,' for "bated.' As it stands, in spite of Warburton's note, I can make little or nothing of it. Why should the king except the then most illustrious states, which, as being republics, were the more truly inheritors of the Roman grandeur ?—With my conjecture, the sense would be ;—'let higher, or the more northern part of Italy—(unless 'higher' be a corruption

for 'hir'd,'—the metre seeming to demand a monosyllable) (those bastards that inherit the infamy only of their fathers) see, &c.' The following 'woo' and 'wed' are so far confirmative as they indicate Shakspeare's manner of connexion by unmarked influences of association from some preceding metaphor. This it is which makes his style so peculiarly vital and organic. Likewise 'those girls of Italy' strengthen the guess. The absurdity of Warburton's gloss, which represents the king calling Italy superior, and then excepting the only part the lords were going to visit, must strike every one.

Ib. sc. 3.

Laf. They say, miracles are past; and we have our philosophical persons to make modern and familiar, things supernatural and *causeless.*

Shakspeare, inspired, as it might seem, with all knowledge, here uses the word 'causeless' in its strict philosophical sense;—cause being truly predicable only of *phenomena*, that is, things natural, and not of *noumena*, or things supernatural.

Act iii. sc. 5.

Dia. The Count Rousillon:—know you such a one?
Hel. But by the ear that hears most nobly of him;
His face I know not.

Shall we say here, that Shakspeare has unnecessarily made his loveliest character utter a lie?—Or shall we dare think that, where to deceive was necessary, he thought a pretended verbal verity a double crime, equally with the other a lie to the hearer, and at the same time an attempt to lie to one's own conscience?

MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR.

Act i. sc. 1.

Shal. The luce is the fresh fish, the salt fish is an old coat.

I CANNOT understand this. Perhaps there is a corruption both of words and speakers. Shallow no sooner corrects one mistake of Sir Hugh's, namely, 'louse' for 'luce,' a pike, but the honest Welchman falls into another, namely, 'cod' (*baccalà*), *Cambrice* 'cot' for coat.

Shal. The luce is the fresh fish—
Evans. The salt fish is an old cot.

'Luce is a fresh fish, and not a louse;' says Shallow. 'Aye, aye,' quoth Sir Hugh; 'the *fresh* fish is the luce; it is an old cod that is the salt fish.' At all events, as the text stands, there is no sense at all in the words.

Ib. sc. 3.

Fal. Now, the report goes, she has all the rule of her husband's purse; she hath a legion of angels.
Pist. As many devils entertain; and *To her, boy,* say I.

Perhaps it is—

As many devils enter (or enter'd) swine; and *to her, boy,* say I:—

a somewhat profane, but not un-Shakspearian, allusion to the 'legion' in St. Luke's 'gospel.'

MEASURE FOR MEASURE.

THIS play, which is Shakspeare's throughout, is to me the most painful—say rather, the only painful—part of his genuine works. The comic and tragic parts equally border on the μισητὸν, — the one being disgusting, the other horrible; and the pardon and marriage of Angelo not merely baffles the strong indignant claim of justice—(for cruelty, with lust and damnable baseness, cannot be forgiven, because we cannot conceive them as being morally repented of;) but it is likewise degrading to the character of woman. Beaumont and Fletcher, who can follow Shakspeare in his errors only, have presented a still worse, because more loathsome and contradictory, instance of the same kind in the Night-Walker, in the marriage of Alathe to Algripe. Of the counter-balancing beauties of Measure for Measure, I need say nothing; for I have already remarked that the play is Shakspeare's throughout.

Act iii. sc. 1.

Ay, but to die, and go we know not where, &c.
This natural fear of Claudio, from the antipathy we have to death, seems very little varied from that infamous wish of Mæcenas, recorded in the 101st epistle of Seneca:

Debilem facito manu,
Debilem pede, coxa, &c. Warburton's note.

I cannot but think this rather an heroic resolve, than

an infamous wish. It appears to me to be the grandest symptom of an immortal spirit, when even that bedimmed and overwhelmed spirit recked not of its own immortality, still to seek to be,—to be a mind, a will.

As fame is to reputation, so heaven is to an estate, or immediate advantage. The difference is, that the self-love of the former cannot exist but by a complete suppression and habitual supplantation of immediate selfishness. In one point of view, the miser is more estimable than the spendthrift;—only that the miser's present feelings are as much of the present as the spendthrift's. But *cæteris paribus*, that is, upon the supposition that whatever is good or lovely in the one coexists equally in the other, then, doubtless, the master of the present is less a selfish being, an animal, than he who lives for the moment with no inheritance in the future. Whatever can degrade man, is supposed in the latter case, whatever can elevate him, in the former. And as to self;—strange and generous self! that can only be such a self by a complete divestment of all that men call self,—of all that can make it either practically to others, or consciously to the individual himself, different from the human race in its ideal. Such self is but a perpetual religion, an inalienable acknowledgment of God, the sole basis and ground of being. In this sense, how can I love God, and not love myself, as far as it is of God?

Ib. sc. 2.

> Pattern in himself to know,
> Grace to stand, and virtue go.

Worse metre, indeed, but better English would be,—

> Grace to stand, virtue to go.

CYMBELINE.

Act i. sc. 1.

> You do not meet a man, but frowns: our bloods
> No more obey the heavens, than our courtiers'
> Still seem, as does the king's.

THERE can be little doubt of Mr. Tyrwhitt's emendations of 'courtiers' and 'king,' as to the sense;—only it is not impossible that Shakspeare's dramatic language may allow of the word, 'brows' or 'faces' being understood after the

word 'courtiers,' which might then remain in the genitive case plural. But the nominative plural makes excellent sense, and is sufficiently elegant, and sounds to my ear Shakspearian. What, however, is meant by 'our bloods no more obey the heavens?'—Dr. Johnson's assertion that 'bloods' signify 'countenances,' is, I think, mistaken both in the thought conveyed—(for it was never a popular belief that the stars governed men's countenances,) and in the usage, which requires an antithesis of the blood,—or the temperament of the four humours, choler, melancholy, phlegm, and the red globules, or the sanguine portion, which was supposed not to be in our own power, but, to be dependent on the influences of the heavenly bodies,—and the countenances which are in our power really, though from flattery we bring them into a no less apparent dependence on the sovereign, than the former are in actual dependence on the constellations.

I have sometimes thought that the word 'courtiers' was a misprint for 'countenances,' arising from an anticipation, by foreglance of the compositor's eye, of the word 'courtier' a few lines below. The written *r* is easily and often confounded with the written *n*. The compositor read the first syllable *court*, and—his eye at the same time catching the word 'courtier' lower down—he completed the word without reconsulting the copy. It is not unlikely that Shakspeare intended first to express, generally the same thought, which a little afterwards he repeats with a particular application to the persons meant;—a common usage of the pronominal 'our,' where the speaker does not really mean to include himself; and the word 'you' is an additional confirmation of the 'our,' being used in this place, for 'men' generally and indefinitely, just as 'you do not meet,' is the same as, 'one does not meet.'

Act i. sc. 2. Imogen's speech: –

> —My dearest husband,
> I something fear my father's wrath; but nothing
> (Always reserv'd my holy duty) what
> His rage can do on me.

Place the emphasis on 'me;' for 'rage' is a mere repetition of 'wrath.'

> *Cym.* O disloyal thing,
> That should'st repair my youth, thou heapest
> A year's age on me!

How is it that the commentators take no notice of the un-Shakspearian defect in the metre of the second line, and what in Shakspeare is the same, in the harmony with the sense and feeling? Some word or words must have slipped out after 'youth,'—possibly 'and see:'—

That should'st repair my youth!—and see, thou heap'st, &c.

Ib. sc. 4. Pisanio's speech:—

—For so long
As he could make me with *this* eye or ear
Distinguish him from others, &c.

But '*this* eye,' in spite of the supposition of its being used δεικτικῶς is very awkward. I should think that either 'or'—or 'the' was Shakspeare's word;—

As he could make me or with eye or ear.

Ib. sc. 7. Iachimo's speech:—

Hath nature given them eyes
To see this vaulted arch, and the rich crop
Of sea and land, which can distinguish 'twixt
The fiery orbs above, and the twinn'd stones
Upon the number'd beach.

I would suggest 'cope' for 'crop.' As to 'twinn'd stones'—may it not be a bold *catachresis* for muscles, cockles, and other empty shells with hinges, which are truly twinned? I would take Dr. Farmer's 'umber'd,' which I had proposed before I ever heard of its having been already offered by him: but I do not adopt his interpretation of the word, which I think is not derived from *umbra*, a shade, but from *umber*, a dingy yellow-brown soil, which most commonly forms the mass of the sludge on the sea shore, and on the banks of tide-rivers at low water. One other possible interpretation of this sentence has occurred to me, just barely worth mentioning;—that the 'twinn'd stones' are the *augrim* stones upon the number'd beech, that is, the astronomical tables of beech-wood.

Act v. sc. 5.

Sooth. When as a lion's whelp, &c.

It is not easy to conjecture why Shakspeare should have introduced this ludicrous scroll, which answers no one purpose, either propulsive, or explicatory, unless as a joke on etymology.

TITUS ANDRONICUS.

Act i. sc. 1. Theobald's note.

I never heard it so much as intimated, that he (Shakspeare) had turned his genius to stage-writing, before he associated with the players, and became one of their body.

THAT Shakspeare never 'turned his genius to stage-writing,' as Theobald most *Theobaldice* phrases it, before he became an actor, is an assertion of about as much authority, as the precious story that he left Stratford for deer-stealing, and that he lived by holding gentlemen's horses at the doors of the theatre, and other trash of that arch-gossip, old Aubrey. The metre is an argument against Titus Andronicus being Shakspeare's, worth a score such chronological surmises. Yet I incline to think that both in this play and in Jeronymo, Shakspeare wrote some passages, and that they are the earliest of his compositions.

Act v. sc. 2.

I think it not improbable that the lines from—

I am not mad; I know thee well enough;
* * * * * * *
So thou destroy Rapine, and Murder there,

were written by Shakspeare in his earliest period. But instead of the text—

Revenge, *which makes the foul offender quake.*
Tit. Art thou Revenge? and art thou sent to me?—

the words in italics ought to be omitted.

TROILUS AND CRESSIDA.

MR. POPE (after Dryden) informs us, that the story of Troilus and Cressida was originally the work of one Lollius, a Lombard: but Dryden goes yet further; he declares it to have been written in Latin verse, and that Chaucer translated it.—*Lollius was a historiographer of Urbino in Italy.* Note in Stockdale's edition, 1807.

'LOLLIUS was a historiographer of Urbino in Italy.' So affirms the notary, to whom the Sieur Stockdale committed the *disfacimento* of Ayscough's excellent edition of Shakspeare. Pity that the researchful notary has not either

told us in what century, and of what history, he was a writer, or been simply content to depose, that Lollius, if a writer of that name existed at all, was a somewhat somewhere. The notary speaks of the *Troy Boke* of Lydgate, printed in 1513. I have never seen it; but I deeply regret that Chalmers did not substitute the whole of Lydgate's works from the MSS. extant, for the almost worthless Gower.

The Troilus and Cressida of Shakspeare can scarcely be classed with his dramas of Greek and Roman history; but it forms an intermediate link between the fictitious Greek and Roman histories, which we may call legendary dramas, and the proper ancient histories; that is, between the Pericles or Titus Andronicus, and the Coriolanus, or Julius Cæsar. Cymbeline is a *congener* with Pericles, and distinguished from Lear by not having any declared prominent object. But where shall we class the Timon of Athens? Perhaps immediately below Lear. It is a Lear of the satirical drama; a Lear of domestic or ordinary life;—a local eddy of passion on the high road of society, while all around is the week-day goings on of wind and weather; a Lear, therefore, without its soul-searching flashes, its ear-cleaving thunder-claps, its meteoric splendours,—without the contagion and the fearful sympathies of nature, the fates, the furies, the frenzied elements, dancing in and out, now breaking through, and scattering, —now hand in hand with,—the fierce or fantastic group of human passions, crimes, and anguishes, reeling on the unsteady ground, in a wild harmony to the shock and the swell of an earthquake. But my present subject was Troilus and Cressida; and I suppose that, scarcely knowing what to say of it, I by a cunning of instinct ran off to subjects on which I should find it difficult not to say too much, though certain after all that I should still leave the better part unsaid, and the gleaning for others richer than my own harvest.

Indeed, there is no one of Shakspeare's plays harder to characterize. The name and the remembrances connected with it, prepare us for the representation of attachment no less faithful than fervent on the side of the youth, and of sudden and shameless inconstancy on the part of the lady. And this is, indeed, as the gold thread on which the scenes are strung, though often kept out of sight and out of mind

by gems of greater value than itself. But as Shakspeare calls forth nothing from the mausoleum of history, or the catacombs of tradition, without giving, or eliciting, some permanent and general interest, and brings forward no subject which he does not moralize or intellectualize,—so here he has drawn in Cressida the portrait of a vehement passion, that, having its true origin and proper cause in warmth of temperament, fastens on, rather than fixes to, some one object by liking and temporary preference.

> There's language in her eye, her cheek, her lip,
> Nay, her foot speaks; her wanton spirits look out
> At every joint and motive of her body.

This Shakspeare has contrasted with the profound affection represented in Troilus, and alone worthy the name of love;—affection, passionate indeed,—swoln with the confluence of youthful instincts and youthful fancy, and growing in the radiance of hope newly risen, in short enlarged by the collective sympathies of nature;—but still having a depth of calmer element in a will stronger than desire, more entire than choice, and which gives permanence to its own act by converting it into faith and duty. Hence with excellent judgment, and with an excellence higher than mere judgment can give, at the close of the play, when Cressida has sunk into infamy below retrieval and beneath hope, the same will, which had been the substance and the basis of his love, while the restless pleasures and passionate longings, like sea-waves, had tossed but on its surface,—this same moral energy is represented as snatching him aloof from all neighbourhood with her dishonour, from all lingering fondness and languishing regrets, whilst it rushes with him into other and nobler duties, and deepens the channel, which his heroic brother's death had left empty for its collected flood. Yet another secondary and subordinate purpose Shakspeare has inwoven with his delineation of these two characters,—that of opposing the inferior civilization, but purer morals, of the Trojans to the refinements, deep policy, but duplicity and sensual corruptions of the Greeks.

To all this, however, so little comparative projection is given,—nay, the masterly group of Agamemnon, Nestor, and Ulysses, and, still more in advance, that of Achilles, Ajax, and Thersites, so manifestly occupy the fore-ground,

that the subservience and vassalage of strength and animal courage to intellect and policy seems to be the lesson most often in our poet's view, and which he has taken little pains to connect with the former more interesting moral impersonated in the titular hero and heroine of the drama. But I am half inclined to believe, that Shakspeare's main object, or shall I rather say, his ruling impulse, was to translate the poetic heroes of paganism into the not less rude, but more intellectually vigorous, and more *featurely*, warriors of Christian chivalry,—and to substantiate the distinct and graceful profiles or outlines of the Homeric epic into the flesh and blood of the romantic drama,—in short, to give a grand history-piece in the robust style of Albert Durer.

The character of Thersites, in particular, well deserves a more careful examination, as the Caliban of demagogic life;—the admirable portrait of intellectual power deserted by all grace, all moral principle, all not momentary impulse;—just wise enough to detect the weak head, and fool enough to provoke the armed fist of his betters;—one whom malcontent Achilles can inveigle from malcontent Ajax, under the one condition, that he shall be called on to do nothing but abuse and slander, and that he shall be allowed to abuse as much and as purulently as he likes, that is, as he can;—in short, a mule,—quarrelsome by the original discord of his nature,—a slave by tenure of his own baseness,—made to bray and be brayed at, to despise and be despicable. 'Aye, Sir, but say what you will, he is a very clever fellow, though the best friends will fall out. There was a time when Ajax thought he deserved to have a statue of gold erected to him, and handsome Achilles, at the head of the Myrmidons, gave no little credit to his *friend Thersites!*'

Act iv. sc. 5. Speech of Ulysses:

> O, these encounterers, so glib of tongue,
> That give a *coasting* welcome ere it comes—

Should it be 'accosting?' 'Accost her, knight, accost!' in the Twelfth Night. Yet there sounds a something so Shakspearian in the phrase—'give a coasting welcome,' ('coasting' being taken as the epithet and adjective of 'welcome,') that had the following words been, 'ere *they land*,' instead of 'ere it comes,' I should have preferred

the interpretation. The sense now is, 'that give welcome to a salute ere it comes.'

CORIOLANUS.

THIS play illustrates the wonderfully philosophic impartiality of Shakspeare's politics. His own country's history furnished him with no matter, but what was too recent to be devoted to patriotism. Besides, he knew that the instruction of ancient history would seem more dispassionate. In Coriolanus and Julius Cæsar, you see Shakspeare's good-natured laugh at mobs. Compare this with Sir Thomas Brown's aristocracy of spirit.

Act i. sc. 1. Coriolanus' speech :—

> He that depends
> Upon your favours, swims with fins of lead,
> And hews down oaks with rushes. Hang ye! Trust ye?

I suspect that Shakspeare wrote it transposed;

> Trust ye? Hang ye!

Ib. sc. 10. Speech of Aufidius :—

> Mine emulation
> Hath not that honour in't, it had; for where
> I thought to crush him in an equal force,
> True sword to sword; I'll potch at him some way,
> Or wrath, or craft may get him.—
> My valour's poison'd
> With only suffering stain by him for him
> Shall fly out of itself: nor sleep, nor sanctuary,
> Being naked, sick, nor fane, nor capitol,
> The prayers of priests, nor times of sacrifices,
> Embarquements all of fury, shall lift up
> Their rotten privilege and custom 'gainst
> My hate to Marcius.

I have such deep faith in Shakspeare's heart-lore, that I take for granted that this is in nature, and not as a mere anomaly; although I cannot in myself discover any germ of possible feeling, which could wax and unfold itself into such sentiment as this. However, I perceive that in this speech is meant to be contained a prevention of shock at the after-change in Aufidius' character.

Act. ii. sc. 1. Speech of Menenius :—

The most sovereign prescription in *Galen*, &c.

Was it without, or in contempt of, historical information that Shakspeare made the contemporaries of Coriolanus quote Cato and Galen? I cannot decide to my own satisfaction.

Ib. sc. 3. Speech of Coriolanus :—

Why in this wolvish gown should I stand here—

That the gown of the candidate was of whitened wool, we know. Does 'wolvish' or 'woolvish' mean 'made of wool'? If it means 'wolfish,' what is the sense?

Act. iv. sc. 7. Speech of Aufidius :

All places yield to him ere he sits down, &c.

I have always thought this, in itself so beautiful speech, the least explicable from the mood and full intention of the speaker of any in the whole works of Shakspeare. I cherish the hope that I am mistaken, and that, becoming wiser, I shall discover some profound excellence in that, in which I now appear to detect an imperfection.

JULIUS CÆSAR.

Act i. sc. 1.

Mar. What meanest *thou* by that? Mend me, thou saucy fellow!

THE speeches of Flavius and Marullus are in blank verse. Wherever regular metre can be rendered truly imitative of character, passion, or personal rank, Shakspeare seldom, if ever, neglects it. Hence this line should be read :—

What mean'st by that? mend me, thou saucy fellow!

I say regular metre: for even the prose has in the highest and lowest dramatic personage, a Cobbler or a Hamlet, a rhythm so felicitous and so severally appropriate, as to be a virtual metre.

Ib. sc. 2.

Bru. A soothsayer bids you beware the Ides of March.

If my ear does not deceive me, the metre of this line was

meant to express that sort of mild philosophic contempt, characterizing Brutus even in his first casual speech. The line is a trimeter,—each *dipobia* containing two accented and two unaccented syllables, but variously arranged, as thus ;—

∪ — — ∪	— ∪ ∪ —	∪ — ∪ —
A soothsayer	bids you beware	the Ides of March.

Ib. Speech of Brutus :

> Set honour in one eye, and death i' the other,
> And I will look on *both* indifferently.

Warburton would read 'death' for 'both' ; but I prefer the old text. There are here three things, the public good, the individual Brutus' honour, and his death. The latter two so balanced each other, that he could decide for the first by equipoise ; nay—the thought growing—that honour had more weight than death. That Cassius understood it as Warburton, is the beauty of Cassius as contrasted with Brutus.

Ib. Cæsar's speech :—

> He loves no plays,
> As thou dost, Antony ; he hears no music, &c.

This is not a trivial observation, nor does our poet mean barely by it, that Cassius was not a merry, sprightly man ; but that he had not a due temperament of harmony in his disposition. Theobald's Note.

O Theobald ! what a commentator wast thou, when thou would'st affect to understand Shakspeare, instead of contenting thyself with collating the text ! The meaning here is too deep for a line ten-fold the length of thine to fathom.

Ib. sc. 3. Casca's speech :—

> Be *factious* for redress of all these griefs ;
> And I will set this foot of mine as far,
> As who goes farthest.

I understand it thus : 'You have spoken as a conspirator ; be so in *fact*, and I will join you. Act on your principles, and realize them in a fact.'

Act ii. sc. 1. Speech of Brutus :—

> It must be by his death ; and, for my part,
> I know no personal cause to spurn at him,
> But for the general. He would be crown'd :
> How that might change his nature, there's the question.

——————And, to speak truth of Cæsar,
I have not known when his affections sway'd
More than his reason.
——————So Cæsar may;
Then, lest he may, prevent.

This speech is singular;—at least, I do not at present see into Shakspeare's motive, his *rationale*, or in what point of view he meant Brutus' character to appear. For surely—(this, I mean, is what I say to myself, with my present *quantum* of insight, only modified by my experience in how many instances I have ripened into a perception of beauties, where I had before descried faults;) surely, nothing can seem more discordant with our historical preconceptions of Brutus, or more lowering to the intellect of the Stoico-Platonic tyrannicide, than the tenets here attributed to him—to him, the stern Roman republican; namely,—that he would have no objection to a king, or to Cæsar, a monarch in Rome, would Cæsar but be as good a monarch as he now seems disposed to be! How, too, could Brutus say that he found no personal cause—none in Cæsar's past conduct as a man? Had he not passed the Rubicon? Had he not entered Rome as a conqueror? Had he not placed his Gauls in the Senate?—Shakspeare, it may be said, has not brought these things forwards—True;—and this is just the ground of my perplexity. What character did Shakspeare mean his Brutus to be?

Ib. Speech of Brutus:—

For if thou *path*, thy native semblance on—

Surely, there need be no scruple in treating this 'path' as a mere misprint or mis-script for 'put.' In what place does Shakspeare,—where does any other writer of the same age—use 'path' as a verb for 'walk?'

Ib. sc. 2. Cæsar's speech:—

She dreamt last night, she saw my *statue*—

No doubt, it should be *statua*, as in the same age, they more often pronounced 'heroes' as a trisyllable than dissyllable. A modern tragic poet would have written,—

Last night she dreamt, that she my statue saw—

But Shakspeare never avails himself of the supposed license of transposition, merely for the metre. There is always some logic either of thought or passion to justify it.

Act iii. sc. 1. Antony's speech :—

> Pardon me, Julius—here wast thou bay'd, brave hart;
> Here didst thou fall; and here thy hunters stand
> Sign'd in thy spoil, and crimson'd in thy death.
> *O world! thou wast the forest to this hart,*
> *And this, indeed, O world! the heart of thee.*

I doubt the genuineness of the last two lines ;—not because they are vile ; but first, on account of the rhythm, which is not Shakspearian, but just the very tune of some old play, from which the actor might have interpolated them ;—and secondly, because they interrupt, not only the sense and connection, but likewise the flow both of the passion, and, (what is with me still more decisive) of the Shakspearian link of association. As with many another parenthesis or gloss slipt into the text, we have only to read the passage without it, to see that it never was in it. I venture to say there is no instance in Shakspeare fairly like this. Conceits he has ; but they not only rise out of some word in the lines before, but also lead to the thought in the lines following. Here the conceit is a mere alien : Antony forgets an image, when he is even touching it, and then recollects it, when the thought last in his mind must have led him away from it.

Act iv. sc. 3. Speech of Brutus :-

> ——What, shall one of us,
> That struck the foremost man of all this world,
> But for *supporting robbers*.

This seemingly strange assertion of Brutus is unhappily verified in the present day. What is an immense army, in which the lust of plunder has quenched all the duties of the citizen, other than a horde of robbers, or differenced only as fiends are from ordinarily reprobate men ? Cæsar supported, and was supported by, such as these ;—and even so Buonaparte in our days.

I know no part of Shakspeare that more impresses on me the belief of his genius being superhuman, than this scene between Brutus and Cassius. In the Gnostic heresy it might have been credited with less absurdity than most of their dogmas, that the Supreme had employed him to create, previously to his function of representing, characters.

ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA.

SHAKSPEARE can be complimented only by comparison with himself: all other eulogies are either heterogeneous, as when they are in reference to Spenser or Milton; or they are flat truisms, as when he is gravely preferred to Corneille, Racine, or even his own immediate successors, Beaumont and Fletcher, Massinger and the rest. The highest praise, or rather form of praise, of this play, which I can offer in my own mind, is the doubt which the perusal always occasions in me, whether the Antony and Cleopatra is not, in all exhibitions of a giant power in its strength and vigour of maturity, a formidable rival of Macbeth, Lear, Hamlet, and Othello. *Feliciter audax* is the motto for its style comparatively with that of Shakspeare's other works, even as it is the general motto of all his works compared with those of other poets. Be it remembered, too, that this happy valiancy of style is but the representative and result of all the material excellencies so expressed.

This play should be perused in mental contrast with Romeo and Juliet;—as the love of passion and appetite opposed to the love of affection and instinct. But the art displayed in the character of Cleopatra is profound; in this, especially, that the sense of criminality in her passion is lessened by our insight into its depth and energy, at the very moment that we cannot but perceive that the passion itself springs out of the habitual craving of a licentious nature, and that it is supported and reinforced by voluntary stimulus and sought-for associations, instead of blossoming out of spontaneous emotion.

Of all Shakspeare's historical plays, Antony and Cleopatra is by far the most wonderful. There is not one in which he has followed history so minutely, and yet there are few in which he impresses the notion of angelic strength so much;—perhaps none in which he impresses it more strongly. This is greatly owing to the manner in which the fiery force is sustained throughout, and to the numerous momentary flashes of nature counteracting the historic abstraction. As a wonderful specimen of the way in which Shakspeare lives up to the very end of this play, read the last part of the concluding scene. And if you would feel the judgment as well as the genius of Shakspeare in your

heart's core, compare this astonishing drama with Dryden's All For Love.

Act i. sc. 1. Philo's speech:

> His captain's heart
> Which in the scuffles of great fights hath burst
> The buckles on his breast, *reneges* all temper—

It should be 'reneagues,' or 'reniegues,' as 'fatigues,' &c.

Ib.

> Take but good note, and you shall see in him
> The triple pillar of the world transform'd
> Into a strumpet's *fool.*

Warburton's conjecture of 'stool' is ingenious, and would be a probable reading, if the scene opening had discovered Antony with Cleopatra on his lap. But, represented as he is walking and jesting with her, 'fool' must be the word. Warburton's objection is shallow, and implies that he confounded the dramatic with the epic style. The 'pillar' of a state is so common a metaphor as to have lost the image in the thing meant to be imaged.

Ib. sc. 2.

> Much is breeding;
> Which, like the courser's hair, hath yet but life,
> And not a serpent's poison.

This is so far true to appearance, that a horse-hair, 'laid,' as Hollinshed says, 'in a pail of water,' will become the supporter of seemingly one worm, though probably of an immense number of small slimy water-lice. The hair will twirl round a finger, and sensibly compress it. It is a common experiment with school boys in Cumberland and Westmorland.

Act. ii. sc. 2. Speech of Enobarbus:—

> Her gentlewomen, like the Nereids,
> So many *mermaids*, tended her i' th' eyes,
> And made their bends adornings. At the helm
> A seeming mermaid steers.

I have the greatest difficulty in believing that Shakspeare wrote the first 'mermaids.' He never, I think, would have so weakened by useless anticipation the fine image immediately following. The epithet 'seeming' becomes so extremely improper after the whole number had been positively called 'so many mermaids.'

TIMON OF ATHENS.

Act i. sc. 1.

Tim. The man is honest.
Old Ath. *Therefore he will be,* Timon.
His honesty rewards him in itself

WARBURTON'S comment—'If the man be honest, for that reason he will be so in this, and not endeavour at the injustice of gaining my daughter without my consent'—is, like almost all his comments, ingenious in blunder; he can never see any other writer's thoughts for the mist-working swarm of his own. The meaning of the first line the poet himself explains, or rather unfolds, in the second. 'The man is honest!'—'True;—and for that very cause, and with no additional or extrinsic motive, he will be so. No man can be justly called honest, who is not so for honesty's sake, itself including its own reward.' Note, that 'honesty' in Shakspeare's age retained much of its old dignity, and that contradistinction of the *honestum* from the *utile*, in which its very essence and definition consists. If it be *honestum*, it cannot depend on the *utile*.

Ib. Speech of Apemantus, printed as prose in Theobald's edition:—

So, so! aches contract, and starve your supple joints!

I may remark here the fineness of Shakspeare's sense of musical period, which would almost by itself have suggested (if the hundred positive proofs had not been extant,) that the word 'aches' was then *ad libitum*, a dissyllable—*aitches*. For read it, 'aches,' in this sentence, and I would challenge you to find any period in Shakspeare's writings with the same musical or, rather dissonant, notation. Try the one, and then the other, by your ear, reading the sentence aloud, first with the word as a dissyllable and then as a monosyllable, and you will feel what I mean.[1]

[1] It is, of course, a verse,—

Achès contract, and starve your supple joints,—

and is so printed in all later editions. But Mr. C. was reading it in prose in Theobald; and it is curious to see how his ear detected the rhythmical necessity for pronouncing 'aches' as a dissyllable, although the metrical necessity seems for the moment to have escaped him. *Ed.*

Ib. sc. 2. Cupid's speech: Warburton's correction of—

> There taste, touch, all pleas'd from thy table rise—

into

> Th' ear, taste, touch, smell, &c.

This is indeed an excellent emendation.

Act. ii. sc. 1. Senator's speech:—

> —nor then silenc'd when
> 'Commend me to your master'—*and the cap*
> *Plays in the right hand, thus*:—

Either, methinks, 'plays' should be 'play'd,' or 'and' should be changed to 'while.' I can certainly understand it as a parenthesis, an interadditive of scorn; but it does not sound to my ear as in Shakspeare's manner.

Ib. sc. 2. Timon's speech: (Theobald.)

> And that unaptness made *you* minister,
> Thus to excuse yourself.

Read *your*;—at least I cannot otherwise understand the line. You made my chance indisposition and occasional unaptness your minister—that is, the ground on which you now excuse yourself. Or, perhaps, no correction is necessary, if we construe 'made you' as 'did you make;' 'and that unaptness did you make help you thus to excuse yourself.' But the former seems more in Shakspeare's manner, and is less liable to be misunderstood.[1]

Act iii. sc. 3. Servant's speech:—

> How fairly this lord strives to appear foul!—takes virtuous copies to be wicked; *like those that under hot, ardent, zeal would set whole realms on fire. Of such a nature is his politic love.*

This latter clause I grievously suspect to have been an addition of the players, which had hit, and, being constantly applauded, procured a settled occupancy in the prompter's copy. Not that Shakspeare does not elsewhere sneer at the Puritans; but here it is introduced so *nolenter volenter* (excuse the phrase) by the head and shoulders!—and is besides so much more likely to have been conceived in the age of Charles I.

Act iv. sc. 2. Timon's speech:—

> Raise me this beggar, and *deny't* that lord.—

Warburton reads 'denude.'

[1] 'Your' is the received reading now. *Ed.*

I cannot see the necessity of this alteration. The editors and commentators are, all of them, ready enough to cry out against Shakspeare's laxities and licenses of style, forgetting that he is not merely a poet, but a dramatic poet; that, when the head and the heart are swelling with fulness, a man does not ask himself whether he has grammatically arranged, but only whether (the context taken in) he has conveyed, his meaning. 'Deny' is here clearly equal to 'withhold;' and the 'it,' quite in the genius of vehement conversation, which a syntaxist explains by ellipses and *subauditurs* in a Greek or Latin classic, yet triumphs over as ignorances in a contemporary, refers to accidental and artificial rank or elevation, implied in the verb 'raise.' Besides, does the word 'denude' occur in any writer before, or of, Shakspeare's age?

ROMEO AND JULIET.

I HAVE previously had occasion to speak at large on the subject of the three unities of time, place, and action, as applied to the drama in the abstract, and to the particular stage for which Shakspeare wrote, as far as he can be said to have written for any stage but that of the universal mind. I hope I have in some measure succeeded in demonstrating that the former two, instead of being rules, were mere inconveniences attached to the local peculiarities of the Athenian drama; that the last alone deserved the name of a principle, and that in the preservation of this unity Shakspeare stood pre-eminent. Yet, instead of unity of action, I should greatly prefer the more appropriate, though scholastic and uncouth, words homogeneity, proportionateness, and totality of interest,—expressions, which involve the distinction, or rather the essential difference, betwixt the shaping skill of mechanical talent, and the creative, productive, life-power of inspired genius. In the former each part is separately conceived, and then by a succeeding act put together;—not as watches are made for wholesale—(for there each part supposes a preconception of the whole in some mind)—but more like pictures on a motley screen. Whence arises the harmony that strikes us in the wildest natural landscapes,—in the relative shapes of rocks, the harmony of colours

in the heaths, ferns, and lichens, the leaves of the beech and the oak, the stems and rich brown branches of the birch and other mountain trees, varying from verging autumn to returning spring,—compared with the visual effect from the greater number of artificial plantations? —From this, that the natural landscape is effected, as it were, by a single energy modified *ab intra* in each component part. And as this is the particular excellence of the Shakspearian drama generally, so is it especially characteristic of the Romeo and Juliet.

The groundwork of the tale is altogether in family life, and the events of the play have their first origin in family feuds. Filmy as are the eyes of party-spirit, at once dim and truculent, still there is commonly some real or supposed object in view, or principle to be maintained; and though but the twisted wires on the plate of rosin in the preparation for electrical pictures, it is still a guide in some degree, an assimilation to an outline. But in family quarrels, which have proved scarcely less injurious to states, wilfulness, and precipitancy, and passion from mere habit and custom, can alone be expected. With his accustomed judgment, Shakspeare has begun by placing before us a lively picture of all the impulses of the play; and, as nature ever presents two sides, one for Heraclitus, and one for Democritus, he has, by way of prelude, shown the laughable absurdity of the evil by the contagion of it reaching the servants, who have so little to do with it, but who are under the necessity of letting the superfluity of sensoreal power fly off through the escape-valve of wit-combats, and of quarrelling with weapons of sharper edge, all in humble imitation of their masters. Yet there is a sort of unhired fidelity, an *ourishness* about all this that makes it rest pleasant on one's feelings. All the first scene, down to the conclusion of the Prince's speech, is a motley dance of all ranks and ages to one tune, as if the horn of Huon had been playing behind the scenes.

Benvolio's speech—

> Madam, an hour before the worshipp'd sun
> Peer'd forth the golden window of the east—

and, far more strikingly, the following speech of old Montague—

> Many a morning hath he there been seen
> With tears augmenting the fresh morning's dew—

prove that Shakspeare meant the Romeo and Juliet to approach to a poem, which, and indeed its early date, may be also inferred from the multitude of rhyming couplets throughout. And if we are right, from the internal evidence, in pronouncing this one of Shakspeare's early dramas, it affords a strong instance of the fineness of his insight into the nature of the passions, that Romeo is introduced already love-bewildered. The necessity of loving creates an object for itself in man and woman ; and yet there is a difference in this respect between the sexes, though only to be known by a perception of it. It would have displeased us if Juliet had been represented as already in love, or as fancying herself so ;—but no one, I believe, ever experiences any shock at Romeo's forgetting his Rosaline, who had been a mere name for the yearning of his youthful imagination, and rushing into his passion for Juliet. Rosaline was a mere creation of his fancy ; and we should remark the boastful positiveness of Romeo in a love of his own making, which is never shown where love is really near the heart.

> When the devout religion of mine eye
> Maintains such falsehood, then turn tears to fires !
> * * * *
> One fairer than my love ! the all-seeing sun
> Ne'er saw her match, since first the world begun.

The character of the Nurse is the nearest of any thing in Shakspeare to a direct borrowing from mere observation ; and the reason is, that as in infancy and childhood the individual in nature is a representative of a class,—just as in describing one larch tree, you generalize a grove of them, —so it is nearly as much so in old age. The generalization is done to the poet's hand. Here you have the garrulity of age strengthened by the feelings of a long-trusted servant, whose sympathy with the mother's affections gives her privileges and rank in the household ; and observe the mode of connection by accidents of time and place, and the childlike fondness of repetition in a second childhood, and also that happy, humble, ducking under, yet constant resurgence against, the check of her superiors !—

> Yes, madam !—Yet I cannot choose but laugh, &c.

In the fourth scene we have Mercutio introduced to us. O ! how shall I describe that exquisite ebullience and

overflow of youthful life, wafted on over the laughing waves of pleasure and prosperity, as a wanton beauty that distorts the face on which she knows her lover is gazing enraptured, and wrinkles her forehead in the triumph of its smoothness! Wit ever wakeful, fancy busy and procreative as an insect, courage, an easy mind that, without cares of its own, is at once disposed to laugh away those of others, and yet to be interested in them,—these and all congenial qualities, melting into the common *copula* of them all, the man of rank and the gentleman, with all its excellences and all its weaknesses, constitute the character of Mercutio!

Act i. sc. 5.

> *Tyb.* It fits when such a villain is a guest;
> I'll not endure him.
> *Cap.* He shall be endur'd.
> What, goodman boy!—I say, he shall:—Go to;—
> Am I the master here, or you?—Go to.
> You'll not endure him!—God shall mend my soul—
> You'll make a mutiny among my guests!
> You will set cock-a-hoop! you'll be the man!
> *Tyb.* Why, uncle, 'tis a shame.
> *Cap.* Go to, go to,
> You are a saucy boy! &c.—

How admirable is the old man's impetuosity at once contrasting, yet harmonized, with young Tybalt's quarrelsome violence! But it would be endless to repeat observations of this sort. Every leaf is different on an oak tree; but still we can only say—our tongues defrauding our eyes—'This is another oak-leaf!'

Act ii. sc. 2. The garden scene:

Take notice in this enchanting scene of the contrast of Romeo's love with his former fancy; and weigh the skill shown in justifying him from his inconstancy by making us feel the difference of his passion. Yet this, too, is a love in, although not merely of, the imagination.

Ib.

> *Jul.* Well, do not swear; although I joy in thee,
> I have no joy of this contract to-night:
> It is too rash, too unadvis'd, too sudden, &c.

With love, pure love, there is always an anxiety for the safety of the object, a disinterestedness, by which it is distinguished from the counterfeits of its name. Compare

this scene with Act iii. sc. 1. of the Tempest. I do not know a more wonderful instance of Shakspeare's mastery in playing a distinctly rememberable variety on the same remembered air, than in the transporting love confessions of Romeo and Juliet and Ferdinand and Miranda. There seems more passion in the one, and more dignity in the other; yet you feel that the sweet girlish lingering and busy movement of Juliet, and the calmer and more maidenly fondness of Miranda, might easily pass into each other.

Ib. sc. 3. The Friar's speech :—

The reverend character of the Friar, like all Shakspeare's representations of the great professions, is very delightful and tranquillizing, yet it is no digression, but immediately necessary to the carrying on of the plot.

Ib. sc. 4.

Rom. Good morrow to you both. What counterfeit did I give you ? &c.

Compare again, Romeo's half-exerted, and half-real, ease of mind with his first manner when in love with Rosaline ! His will had come to the clenching point.

Ib. sc. 6.

Rom. Do thou but close our hands with holy words,
Then love-devouring death do what he dare,
It is enough I may but call her mine.

The precipitancy, which is the character of the play, is well marked in this short scene of waiting for Juliet's arrival.

Act iii. sc. 1.

Mer. No, 'tis not so deep as a well, nor so wide as a church door; but 'tis enough: 'twill serve: ask for me to-morrow, and you shall find me a grave man, &c.

How fine an effect the wit and raillery habitual to Mercutio, even struggling with his pain, give to Romeo's following speech, and at the same time so completely justifying his passionate revenge on Tybalt !

Ib. Benvolio's speech :

But that he tilts
With piercing steel at bold Mercutio's breast.

This small portion of untruth in Benvolio's narrative is finely conceived.

Ib. sc. 2. Juliet's speech :

> For thou wilt lie upon the wings of night
> Whiter than new snow on a raven's back.—

Indeed the whole of this speech is imagination strained to the highest ; and observe the blessed effect on the purity of the mind. What would Dryden have made of it ?—

Ib.

> *Nurse.* Shame come to Romeo.
> *Jul.* Blister'd be thy tongue
> For such a wish !

Note the Nurse's mistake of the mind's audible struggles with itself for its decision *in toto*.

Ib. sc. 3. Romeo's speech :—

> 'Tis torture, and not mercy : heaven is here,
> Where Juliet lives, &c.

All deep passions are a sort of atheists, that believe no future.

Ib. sc. 5.

> *Cap.* Soft, take me with you, take me with you, wife—
> How ! will she none ? &c.

A noble scene ! Don't I see it with my own eyes ?—Yes ! but not with Juliet's. And observe in Capulet's last speech in this scene his mistake, as if love's causes were capable of being generalized.

Act iv. sc. 3. Juliet's speech :—

> O, look ! methinks I see my cousin's ghost
> Seeking out Romeo, that did spit his body
> Upon a rapier's point :—Stay, Tybalt, stay !—
> Romeo, I come ! this do I drink to thee.

Shakspeare provides for the finest decencies. It would have been too bold a thing for a girl of fifteen ;—but she swallows the draught in a fit of fright.

Ib. sc. 5.

As the audience know that Juliet is not dead, this scene is, perhaps, excusable. But it is a strong warning to minor dramatists not to introduce at one time many separate characters agitated by one and the same circumstance. It is difficult to understand what effect, whether that of pity or of laughter, Shakspeare meant to produce ; —the occasion and the characteristic speeches are so

little in harmony! For example, what the Nurse says is excellently suited to the Nurse's character, but grotesquely unsuited to the occasion.

Act v. sc. 1. Romeo's speech :—

> O mischief! thou art swift
> To enter in the thoughts of desperate men!
> I do remember an apothecary, &c.

This famous passage is so beautiful as to be self-justified; yet, in addition, what a fine preparation it is for the tomb scene!

Ib. sc. 3. Romeo's speech :—

> Good gentle youth, tempt not a desperate man,
> Fly hence and leave me.

The gentleness of Romeo was shown before, as softened by love; and now it is doubled by love and sorrow and awe of the place where he is.

Ib. Romeo's speech :—

> How oft when men are at the point of death
> Have they been merry! which their keepers call
> A lightning before death. O, how may I
> Call this a lightning?—O, my love, my wife! &c.

Here, here, is the master example how beauty can at once increase and modify passion!

Ib. Last scene.

How beautiful is the close! The spring and the winter meet;—winter assumes the character of spring, and spring the sadness of winter.

SHAKSPEARE'S ENGLISH HISTORICAL PLAYS.

THE first form of poetry is the epic, the essence of which may be stated as the successive in events and characters. This must be distinguished from narration, in which there must always be a narrator, from whom the objects represented receive a colouring and a manner;—whereas in the epic, as in the so called poems of Homer, the whole is completely objective, and the representation is a pure reflection. The next form into which poetry passed was

the dramatic;—both forms having a common basis with a certain difference, and that difference not consisting in the dialogue alone. Both are founded on the relation of providence to the human will; and this relation is the universal element, expressed under different points of view according to the difference of religion, and the moral and intellectual cultivation of different nations. In the epic poem fate is represented as overruling the will, and making it instrumental to the accomplishment of its designs:—

——— Διὸς δὲ τελείετο βουλή.

In the drama, the will is exhibited as struggling with fate, a great and beautiful instance and illustration of which is the Prometheus of Æschylus; and the deepest effect is produced, when the fate is represented as a higher and intelligent will, and the opposition of the individual as springing from a defect.

In order that a drama may be properly historical, it is necessary that it should be the history of the people to whom it is addressed. In the composition, care must be taken that there appear no dramatic improbability, as the reality is taken for granted. It must, likewise, be poetical;—that only, I mean, must be taken which is the permanent in our nature, which is common, and therefore deeply interesting to all ages. The events themselves are immaterial, otherwise than as the clothing and manifestation of the spirit that is working within. In this mode, the unity resulting from succession is destroyed, but is supplied by a unity of a higher order, which connects the events by reference to the workers, gives a reason for them in the motives, and presents men in their causative character. It takes, therefore, that part of real history which is the least known, and infuses a principle of life and organization into the naked facts, and makes them all the framework of an animated whole.

In my happier days, while I had yet hope and onward-looking thoughts, I planned an historical drama of King Stephen, in the manner of Shakspeare. Indeed it would be desirable that some man of dramatic genius should dramatize all those omitted by Shakspeare, as far down as Henry VII. Perkin Warbeck would make a most interesting drama. A few scenes of Marlow's Edward II. might be preserved. After Henry VIII., the events are too well

and distinctly known, to be, without plump inverisimilitude, crowded together in one night's exhibition. Whereas, the history of our ancient kings—the events of their reigns, I mean,—are like stars in the sky;—whatever the real interspaces may be, and however great, they seem close to each other. The stars—the events—strike us and remain in our eye, little modified by the difference of dates. An historic drama is, therefore, a collection of events borrowed from history, but connected together in respect of cause and time, poetically and by dramatic fiction. It would be a fine national custom to act such a series of dramatic histories in orderly succession, in the yearly Christmas holidays, and could not but tend to counteract that mock cosmopolitism, which under a positive term really implies nothing but a negation of, or indifference to, the particular love of our country. By its nationality must every nation retain its independence;—I mean a nationality *quoad* the nation. Better thus;—nationality in each individual, *quoad* his country, is equal to the sense of individuality *quoad* himself; but himself as subsensuous, and central. Patriotism is equal to the sense of individuality reflected from every other individual. There may come a higher virtue in both—just cosmopolitism. But this latter is not possible but by antecedence of the former.

Shakspeare has included the most important part of nine reigns in his historical dramas—namely—King John, Richard II.—Henry IV. (two)—Henry V.—Henry VI. (three) including Edward V. and Henry VIII., in all ten plays. There remain, therefore, to be done, with the exception of a single scene or two that should be adopted from Marlow—eleven reigns—of which the first two appear the only unpromising subjects;—and those two dramas must be formed wholly or mainly of invented private stories, which, however, could not have happened except in consequence of the events and measures of these reigns, and which should furnish opportunity both of exhibiting the manners and oppressions of the times, and of narrating dramatically the great events;—if possible, the death of the two sovereigns, at least of the latter, should be made to have some influence on the finale of the story. All the rest are glorious subjects; especially Henry 1st. (being the struggle between the men of arms and of letters, in the

persons of Henry and Becket,) Stephen, Richard I., Edward II., and Henry VII.

KING JOHN.

Act i. sc. 1.

> *Bast.* James Gurney, wilt thou give us leave awhile?
> *Gur.* Good leave, good Philip.
> *Bast.* Philip? *sparrow!* James, &c.

THEOBALD adopts Warburton's conjecture of '*spare me.*'

O true Warburton! and the *sancta simplicitas* of honest dull Theobald's faith in him! Nothing can be more lively or characteristic than 'Philip? Sparrow!' Had Warburton read old Skelton's 'Philip Sparrow,' an exquisite and original poem, and, no doubt, popular in Shakspeare's time, even Warburton would scarcely have made so deep a plunge into the *bathetic* as to have deathified 'sparrow' into 'spare me!'

Act iii. sc. 2. Speech of Faulconbridge:—

> Now, by my life, this day grows wondrous hot;
> Some *airy* devil hovers in the sky, &c.

Theobald adopts Warburton's conjecture of 'fiery.'

I prefer the old text: the word 'devil' implies 'fiery.' You need only read the line, laying a full and strong emphasis on 'devil,' to perceive the uselessness and tastelessness of Warburton's alteration.

RICHARD II.

I HAVE stated that the transitional link between the epic poem and the drama is the historic drama; that in the epic poem a pre-announced fate gradually adjusts and employs the will and the events as its instruments, whilst the drama, on the other hand, places fate and will in opposition to each other, and is then most perfect, when the victory of fate is obtained in consequence of imperfections in the opposing will, so as to leave a final impression that the fate itself is but a higher and a more intelligent will.

From the length of the speeches, and the circumstance that, with one exception, the events are all historical, and presented in their results, not produced by acts seen by, or taking place before, the audience, this tragedy is ill suited to our present large theatres. But in itself, and for the closet, I feel no hesitation in placing it as the first and most admirable of all Shakspeare's purely historical plays. For the two parts of Henry IV. form a species of themselves, which may be named the mixed drama. The distinction does not depend on the mere quantity of historical events in the play compared with the fictions; for there is as much history in Macbeth as in Richard, but in the relation of the history to the plot. In the purely historical plays, the history forms the plot; in the mixed, it directs it; in the rest, as Macbeth, Hamlet, Cymbeline, Lear, it subserves it. But, however unsuited to the stage this drama may be, God forbid that even there it should fall dead on the hearts of jacobinized Englishmen! Then, indeed, we might say—*præteriit gloria mundi!* For the spirit of patriotic reminiscence is the all-permeating soul of this noble work. It is, perhaps, the most purely historical of Shakspeare's dramas. There are not in it, as in the others, characters introduced merely for the purpose of giving a greater individuality and realness, as in the comic parts of Henry IV., by presenting, as it were, our very selves. Shakspeare avails himself of every opportunity to effect the great object of the historic drama, that, namely, of familiarizing the people to the great names of their country, and thereby of exciting a steady patriotism, a love of just liberty, and a respect for all those fundamental institutions of social life, which bind men together:—

> This royal throne of kings, this sceptr'd isle,
> This earth of majesty, this seat of Mars,
> This other Eden, demi-paradise;
> This fortress, built by nature for herself,
> Against infection, and the hand of war;
> This happy breed of men, this little world
> This precious stone set in the silver sea,
> Which serves it in the office of a wall,
> Or as a moat defensive to a home,
> Against the envy of less happier lands;
> This blessed plot, this earth, this realm, this England,
> This nurse, this teeming womb of royal kings,
> Fear'd by their breed, and famous by their birth, &c.

Add the famous passage in King John :—

> This England never did, nor ever shall,
> Lie at the proud foot of a conqueror,
> But when it first did help to wound itself.
> Now these her princes are come home again,
> Come the three corners of the world in arms,
> And we shall shock them : nought shall make us rue,
> If England to itself do rest but true.

And it certainly seems that Shakspeare's historic dramas produced a very deep effect on the minds of the English people, and in earlier times they were familiar even to the least informed of all ranks, according to the relation of Bishop Corbett. Marlborough, we know, was not ashamed to confess that his principal acquaintance with English history was derived from them ; and I believe that a large part of the information as to our old names and achievements even now abroad is due, directly or indirectly, to Shakspeare.

Admirable is the judgment with which Shakspeare always in the first scenes prepares, yet how naturally, and with what concealment of art, for the catastrophe. Observe how he here presents the germ of all the after events in Richard's insincerity, partiality, arbitrariness, and favoritism, and in the proud, tempestuous, temperament of his barons. In the very beginning, also, is displayed that feature in Richard's character, which is never forgotten throughout the play—his attention to decorum, and high feeling of the kingly dignity. These anticipations show with what judgment Shakspeare wrote, and illustrate his care to connect the past and future, and unify them with the present by forecast and reminiscence.

It is interesting to a critical ear to compare the six opening lines of the play—

> Old John of Gaunt, time-honour'd Lancaster,
> Hast thou, according to thy oath and band, &c.

each closing at the tenth syllable, with the rhythmless metre of the verse in Henry VI. and Titus Andronicus, in order that the difference, indeed, the heterogeneity, of the two may be felt *etiam in simillimis prima superficie*. Here the weight of the single words supplies all the relief afforded by intercurrent verse, while the whole represents the mood.

And compare the apparently defective metre of Bolingbroke's first line,—

Many years of happy days befall—

with Prospero's,

Twelve years since, Miranda! twelve years since—

The actor should supply the time by emphasis, and pause on the first syllable of each of these verses.

Act i. sc. 1. Bolingbroke's speech :—

First, (heaven be the record to my speech!)
In the devotion of a subject's love, &c.

I remember in the Sophoclean drama no more striking example of the τὸ πρέπον καὶ σεμνὸν than this speech; and the rhymes in the last six lines well express the preconcertedness of Bolingbroke's scheme so beautifully contrasted with the vehemence and sincere irritation of Mowbray.

Ib. Bolingbroke's speech :—

Which blood, like sacrificing Abel's, cries,
Even from the tongueless caverns of the earth,
To *me*, for justice and rough chastisement.

Note the δεινὸν of this 'to me,' which is evidently felt by Richard :—

How high a pitch his resolution soars!

and the affected depreciation afterwards ;—

As he is but my father's brother's son.

Ib. Mowbray's speech :—

In haste whereof, most heartily I pray
Your highness to assign our trial day.

The occasional interspersion of rhymes, and the more frequent winding up of a speech therewith—what purpose was this designed to answer? In the earnest drama, I mean. Deliberateness? An attempt, as in Mowbray, to collect himself and be cool at the close?—I can see that in the following speeches the rhyme answers the end of the Greek chorus, and distinguishes the general truths from the passions of the dialogue; but this does not exactly justify the practice, which is unfrequent in proportion to the excellence of Shakspeare's plays. One thing, however,

is to be observed,—that the speakers are historical, known, and so far formal, characters, and their reality is already a fact. This should be borne in mind. The whole of this scene of the quarrel between Mowbray and Bolingbroke seems introduced for the purpose of showing by anticipation the characters of Richard and Bolingbroke. In the latter there is observable a decorous and courtly checking of his anger in subservience to a predetermined plan, especially in his calm speech after receiving sentence of banishment compared with Mowbray's unaffected lamentation. In the one, all is ambitious hope of something yet to come; in the other it is desolation and a looking backward of the heart.

Ib. sc. 2.

> *Gaunt* Heaven's is the quarrel; for heaven's substitute,
> His deputy anointed in his right,
> Hath caus'd his death: the which, if wrongfully,
> Let heaven revenge; for I may never lift
> An angry arm against his minister.

Without the hollow extravagance of Beaumont and Fletcher's ultra-royalism, how carefully does Shakspeare acknowledge and reverence the eternal distinction between the mere individual, and the symbolic or representative, on which all genial law, no less than patriotism, depends. The whole of this second scene commences, and is anticipative of, the tone and character of the play at large.

Ib. sc. 3. In none of Shakspeare's fictitious dramas, or in those founded on a history as unknown to his auditors generally as fiction, is this violent rupture of the succession of time found:—a proof, I think, that the pure historic drama, like Richard II. and King John, had its own laws.

Ib. Mowbray's speech:—

> A dearer *merit*
> Have I deserved at your highness' hands.

O, the instinctive propriety of Shakspeare in the choice of words!

Ib. Richard's speech:

> Nor never by advised purpose meet,
> To plot, contrive, or complot any ill,
> 'Gainst us, our state, our subjects, or our land.

Already the selfish weakness of Richard's character

opens. Nothing will such minds so readily embrace, as indirect ways softened down to their *quasi*-consciences by policy, expedience, &c.

Ib. Mowbray's speech :—

'. All the world's my way.'

'The world was all before him.'—*Milt.*

Ib.

Boling. How long a time lies in our little word!
Four lagging winters, and four wanton springs,
End in a word: such is the breath of kings.

Admirable anticipation!

Ib. sc. 4. This is a striking conclusion of a first act,—letting the reader into the secret ;—having before impressed us with the dignified and kingly manners of Richard, yet by well managed anticipations leading us on to the full gratification of pleasure in our own penetration. In this scene a new light is thrown on Richard's character. Until now he has appeared in all the beauty of royalty; but here, as soon as he is left to himself, the inherent weakness of his character is immediately shown. It is a weakness, however, of a peculiar kind, not arising from want of personal courage, or any specific defect of faculty, but rather an intellectual femininenes, which feels a necessity of ever leaning on the breasts of others, and of reclining on those who are all the while known to be inferiors. To this must be attributed as its consequences all Richard's vices, his tendency to concealment, and his cunning, the whole operation of which is directed to the getting rid of present difficulties. Richard is not meant to be a debauchee; but we see in him that sophistry which is common to man, by which we can deceive our own hearts, and at one and the same time apologize for, and yet commit, the error. Shakspeare has represented this character in a very peculiar manner. He has not made him amiable with counterbalancing faults; but has openly and broadly drawn those faults without reserve, relying on Richard's disproportionate sufferings and gradually emergent good qualities for our sympathy; and this was possible, because his faults are not positive vices, but spring entirely from defect of character.

Act ii. sc. 1.

K. Rich. Can sick men play so nicely with their names?

Yes! on a death-bed there is a feeling which may make all things appear but as puns and equivocations. And a passion there is that carries off its own excess by plays on words as naturally, and, therefore, as appropriately to drama, as by gesticulations, looks, or tones. This belongs to human nature as such, independently of associations and habits from any particular rank of life or mode of employment; and in this consists Shakspeare's vulgarisms, as in Macbeth's—

The devil damn thee black, thou cream-fac'd loon! &c.

This is (to equivocate on Dante's words) in truth the *nobile volgare eloquenza*. Indeed it is profoundly true that there is a natural, an almost irresistible, tendency in the mind, when immersed in one strong feeling, to connect that feeling with every sight and object around it; especially if there be opposition, and the words addressed to it are in any way repugnant to the feeling itself, as here in the instance of Richard's unkind language:

Misery makes sport to mock itself.

No doubt, something of Shakspeare's punning must be attributed to his age, in which direct and formal combats of wit were a favourite pastime of the courtly and accomplished. It was an age more favourable, upon the whole, to vigour of intellect than the present, in which a dread of being thought pedantic dispirits and flattens the energies of original minds. But independently of this, I have no hesitation in saying that a pun, if it be congruous with the feeling of the scene, is not only allowable in the dramatic dialogue, but oftentimes one of the most effectual intensives of passion.

K. Rich. Right; you say true: as Hereford's love, so his;
As theirs, so mine; and all be as it is.

The depth of this compared with the first scene:—

How high a pitch, &c.

There is scarcely anything in Shakspeare in its degree, more admirably drawn than York's character; his religious loyalty struggling with a deep grief and indignation at the king's follies; his adherence to his word and faith, once given in spite of all, even the most natural, feelings. You see in him the weakness of old age, and the overwhelming-

ness of circumstances, for a time surmounting his sense of duty,—the junction of both exhibited in his boldness in words and feebleness in immediate act; and then again his effort to retrieve himself in abstract loyalty, even at the heavy price of the loss of his son. This species of accidental and adventitious weakness is brought into parallel with Richard's continually increasing energy of thought, and as constantly diminishing power of acting;—and thus it is Richard that breathes a harmony and a relation into all the characters of the play.

Ib. sc. 2.

Queen. To please the king I did; to please myself
I cannot do it; yet I know no cause
Why I should welcome such a guest as grief,
Save bidding farewell to so sweet a guest
As my sweet Richard: yet again, methinks,
Some unborn sorrow, ripe in sorrow's womb,
Is coming toward me; and my inward soul
With nothing trembles: at something it grieves,
More than with parting from my lord the king.

It is clear that Shakspeare never meant to represent Richard as a vulgar debauchee, but a man with a wantonness of spirit in external show, a feminine *friendism*, an intensity of woman-like love of those immediately about him, and a mistaking of the delight of being loved by him for a love of him. And mark in this scene Shakspeare's gentleness in touching the tender superstitions, the *terræ incognitæ* of presentiments, in the human mind; and how sharp a line of distinction he commonly draws between these obscure forecastings of general experience in each individual, and the vulgar errors of mere tradition. Indeed it may be taken once for all as the truth, that Shakspeare, in the absolute universality of his genius, always reverences whatever arises out of our moral nature; he never profanes his muse with a contemptuous reasoning away of the genuine and general, however unaccountable, feelings of mankind.

The amiable part of Richard's character is brought full upon us by his queen's few words—

. . . . so sweet a guest
As my sweet Richard;—

and Shakspeare has carefully shown in him an intense love of his country, well-knowing how that feeling would, in a pure

historic drama, redeem him in the hearts of the audience. Yet even in this love there is something feminine and personal :—

> Dear earth, I do salute thee with my hand,—
> As a long parted mother with her child
> Plays fondly with her tears, and smiles in meeting;
> So weeping, smiling, greet I thee, my earth,
> And do thee favour with my royal hands.

With this is combined a constant overflow of emotions from a total incapability of controlling them, and thence a waste of that energy, which should have been reserved for actions, in the passion and effort of mere resolves and menaces. The consequence is moral exhaustion, and rapid alternations of unmanly despair and ungrounded hope,—every feeling being abandoned for its direct opposite upon the pressure of external accident. And yet when Richard's inward weakness appears to seek refuge in his despair, and his exhaustion counterfeits repose, the old habit of kingliness, the effect of flatterers from his infancy, is ever and anon producing in him a sort of wordy courage which only serves to betray more clearly his internal impotence. The second and third scenes of the third act combine and illustrate all this :—

Aumerle. He means, my lord, that we are too remiss;
Whilst Bolingbroke, through our security,
Grows strong and great, in substance, and in friends.
K. Rich. Discomfortable cousin! know'st thou not,
That when the searching eye of heaven is hid
Behind the globe, and lights the lower world,
Then thieves and robbers range abroad unseen,
In murders and in outrage, boldly here;
But when, from under this terrestrial ball,
He fires the proud tops of the eastern pines,
And darts his light through every guilty hole,
Then murders, treasons, and detested sins,
The cloke of night being pluck'd from off their backs,
Stand bare and naked, trembling at themselves?
So when this thief, this traitor, Bolingbroke, &c.
* * * * *
Aumerle. Where is the Duke my father with his power?
K. Rich. No matter where; of comfort no man speak:
Let's talk of graves, of worms, and epitaphs,
Make dust our paper, and with rainy eyes
Write sorrow on the bosom of the earth, &c.
* * * * *
Aumerle. My father hath a power, enquire of him;
And learn to make a body of a limb.

K. Rich. Thou chid'st me well: proud Bolingbroke, I come
To change blows with thee for our day of doom.
This ague-fit of fear is over-blown;
An easy task it is to win our own.
* * * *
Scroop. Your uncle York is join'd with Bolingbroke.—
* * * *
K. Rich. Thou hast said enough,
Beshrew thee, cousin, which didst lead me forth
Of that sweet way I was in to despair!
What say you now? what comfort have we now?
By heaven, I'll hate him everlastingly,
That bids me be of comfort any more.
* * * *

Act iii. sc. 3. Bolingbroke's speech:

Noble lord,
Go to the rude ribs of that ancient castle, &c.

Observe the fine struggle of a haughty sense of power and ambition in Bolingbroke with the necessity for dissimulation.

Ib. sc. 4. See here the skill and judgment of our poet in giving reality and individual life, by the introduction of accidents in his historic plays, and thereby making them dramas, and not histories. How beautiful an islet of repose—a melancholy repose, indeed—is this scene with the Gardener and his Servant. And how truly affecting and realizing is the incident of the very horse Barbary, in the scene with the Groom in the last act!—

Groom. I was a poor groom of thy stable, King,
When thou wert King; who, travelling towards York,
With much ado, at length have gotten leave
To look upon my sometimes master's face.
O, how it yearn'd my heart, when I beheld,
In London streets, that coronation day,
When Bolingbroke rode on roan Barbary!
That horse, that thou so often hast bestrid;
That horse, that I so carefully have dress'd!
K. Rich. Rode he on Barbary?

Bolingbroke's character, in general, is an instance how Shakspeare makes one play introductory to another; for it is evidently a preparation for Henry IV., as Gloster in the third part of Henry VI. is for Richard III.

I would once more remark upon the exalted idea of the only true loyalty developed in this noble and impressive play. We have neither the rants of Beaumont and

Fletcher, nor the sneers of Massinger;—the vast importance of the personal character of the sovereign is distinctly enounced, whilst, at the same time, the genuine sanctity which surrounds him is attributed to, and grounded on, the position in which he stands as the convergence and exponent of the life and power of the state.

The great end of the body politic appears to be to humanize, and assist in the progressiveness of, the animal man;—but the problem is so complicated with contingencies as to render it nearly impossible to lay down rules for the formation of a state. And should we be able to form a system of government, which should so balance its different powers as to form a check upon each, and so continually remedy and correct itself, it would, nevertheless, defeat its own aim;—for man is destined to be guided by higher principles, by universal views, which can never be fulfilled in this state of existence,—by a spirit of progressiveness which can never be accomplished, for then it would cease to be. Plato's Republic is like Bunyan's Town of Man-Soul,—a description of an individual, all of whose faculties are in their proper subordination and interdependence; and this it is assumed may be the prototype of the state as one great individual. But there is this sophism in it, that it is forgotten that the human faculties, indeed, are parts and not separate things; but that you could never get chiefs who were wholly reason, ministers who were wholly understanding, soldiers all wrath, labourers all concupiscence, and so on through the rest. Each of these partakes of, and interferes with, all the others.

HENRY IV. PART I.

Act i. sc. 1. King Henry's speech:

> No more the thirsty entrance of this soil
> Shall daub her lips with her own children's blood.

A MOST obscure passage: but I think Theobald's interpretation right, namely, that 'thirsty entrance' means the dry penetrability, or bibulous drought, of the soil. The obscurity of this passage is of the Shakspearian sort.

Ib. sc. 2. In this, the first introduction of Falstaff,

observe the consciousness and the intentionality of his wit, so that when it does not flow of its own accord, its absence is felt, and an effort visibly made to recall it. Note also throughout how Falstaff's pride is gratified in the power of influencing a prince of the blood, the heir apparent, by means of it. Hence his dislike to Prince John of Lancaster, and his mortification when he finds his wit fail on him :—

P. John. Fare you well, Falstaff : I, in my condition,
Shall better speak of you than you deserve.
Fal. I would you had but the wit ; 'twere better than your dukedom.—Good faith, this same young sober-blooded boy doth not love me ;—nor a man cannot make him laugh.

Act ii. sc. 1. Second Carrier's speech :—

. . . . breeds fleas like a *loach.*

Perhaps it is a misprint, or a provincial pronunciation, for 'leach,' that is, blood-suckers. Had it been gnats, instead of fleas, there might have been some sense, though small probability, in Warburton's suggestion of the Scottish 'loch.' Possibly 'loach,' or 'lutch,' may be some lost word for dovecote, or poultry-lodge, notorious for breeding fleas. In Stevens's or my reading, it should properly be 'loaches,' or 'leeches,' in the plural ; except that I think I have heard anglers speak of trouts like *a* salmon.

Act iii. sc. 1.

Glend. Nay, if you melt, then will she run mad.

This 'nay' so to be dwelt on in speaking, as to be equivalent to a dissyllable –∪, is characteristic of the solemn Glendower ; but the imperfect line

She bids you
On the wanton rushes lay you down, &c.

is one of those fine hair-strokes of exquisite judgment peculiar to Shakspeare ; — thus detaching the Lady's speech, and giving it the individuality and entireness of a little poem, while he draws attention to it.

HENRY IV. PART II.

Act ii. sc. 2.

P. Hen. Sup any women with him ?
Page. None, my lord, but old mistress Quickly, and mistress Doll Tear-sheet.
* * * *
P. Hen. This Doll Tear-sheet should be some road.

I AM sometimes disposed to think that this respectable young lady's name is a very old corruption for Tear-street—street-walker, *terere stratam* (*viam.*) Does not the Prince's question rather show this ?—

'This Doll Tear-street should be some road ?'

Act iii. sc. 1. King Henry's speech :

. Then, *happy low, lie down ;*
Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown.

I know no argument by which to persuade any one to be of my opinion, or rather of my feeling ; but yet I cannot help feeling that 'Happy low-lie-down !' is either a proverbial expression, or the burthen of some old song, and means, 'Happy the man, who lays himself down on his straw bed or chaff pallet on the ground or floor !'

Ib. sc. 2. Shallow's speech :—

Rah, tah, tah, would 'a say ; *bounce,* would 'a say, &c.

That Beaumont and Fletcher have more than once been guilty of sneering at their great master, cannot, I fear, be denied ; but the passage quoted by Theobald from the Knight of the Burning Pestle is an imitation. If it be chargeable with any fault, it is with plagiarism, not with sarcasm.

HENRY V.

Act i. sc. 2. Westmoreland's speech :—

They know your *grace* hath cause, and means, and might ;
So hath your *highness ;* never King of England
Had nobles richer, &c.

DOES 'grace' mean the king's own peculiar domains and legal revenue, and 'highness' his feudal rights in the

military service of his nobles ?—I have sometimes thought it possible that the words 'grace' and 'cause' may have been transposed in the copying or printing ;—

> They know your cause hath grace, &c.

What Theobald meant, I cannot guess. To me his pointing makes the passage still more obscure. Perhaps the lines ought to be recited dramatically thus :

> They know your Grace hath cause, and means, and might :—
> So *hath* your Highness—never King of England
> *Had* nobles richer, &c.

He breaks off from the grammar and natural order from earnestness, and in order to give the meaning more passionately.

Ib. Exeter's speech :—

> Yet that is but a *crush'd* necessity.

Perhaps it may be 'crash' for 'crass' from *crassus*, clumsy ; or it may be 'curt,' defective, imperfect : anything would be better than Warburton's "scus'd,' which honest Theobald, of course, adopts. By the by, it seems clear to me that this speech of Exeter's properly belongs to Canterbury, and was altered by the actors for convenience.

Act iv. sc. 3. K. Henry's speech :—

> We would not *die* in that man's company
> That fears his fellowship to die with us.

Should it not be 'live' in the first line ?

Ib. sc. 5.

> *Const. O diable !*
> *Orl. O seigneur ! le jour est perdu, tout est perdu !*
> *Dan. Mort de ma vie !* all is confounded, all !
> Reproach and everlasting shame
> Sit mocking in our plumes !—*O meschante fortune !*
> Do not run away !

Ludicrous as these introductory scraps of French appear, so instantly followed by good, nervous mother-English, yet they are judicious, and produce the impression which Shakspeare intended,—a sudden feeling struck at once on the ears, as well as the eyes, of the audience, that 'here come the French, the baffled French braggards !'—And this will appear still more judicious, when we reflect on the scanty apparatus of distinguishing dresses in Shakspeare's tyring-room.

HENRY VI. PART I.

Act i. sc. 1. Bedford's speech :—

> Hung be the heavens with black, yield day to night!
> Comets, importing change of times and states,
> Brandish your crystal tresses in the sky;
> And with them scourge the bad revolting stars
> That have consented unto Henry's death!
> King Henry the fifth, too famous to live long!
> England ne'er lost a king of so much worth.

READ aloud any two or three passages in blank verse even from Shakspeare's earliest dramas, as Love's Labour's Lost, or Romeo and Juliet; and then read in the same way this speech, with especial attention to the metre; and if you do not feel the impossibility of the latter having been written by Shakspeare, all I dare suggest is, that you may have ears,—for so has another animal,—but an ear you cannot have, *me judice.*

RICHARD III.

THIS play should be contrasted with Richard II. Pride of intellect is the characteristic of Richard, carried to the extent of even boasting to his own mind of his villany, whilst others are present to feed his pride of superiority; as in his first speech, act ii. sc. 1. Shakspeare here, as in all his great parts, developes in a tone of sublime morality the dreadful consequences of placing the moral, in subordination to the mere intellectual, being. In Richard there is a predominance of irony, accompanied with apparently blunt manners to those immediately about him, but formalized into a more set hypocrisy towards the people as represented by their magistrates.

LEAR.

OF all Shakspeare's plays Macbeth is the most rapid, Hamlet the slowest, in movement. Lear combines length with rapidity,—like the hurricane and the whirlpool, absorbing while it advances. It begins as a stormy day

in summer, with brightness; but that brightness is lurid, and anticipates the tempest.

It was not without forethought, nor is it without its due significance, that the division of Lear's kingdom is in the first six lines of the play stated as a thing already determined in all its particulars, previously to the trial of professions, as the relative rewards of which the daughters were to be made to consider their several portions. The strange, yet by no means unnatural, mixture of selfishness, sensibility, and habit of feeling derived from, and fostered by, the particular rank and usages of the individual;—the intense desire of being intensely beloved,—selfish, and yet characteristic of the selfishness of a loving and kindly nature alone;—the self-supportless leaning for all pleasure on another's breast;—the craving after sympathy with a prodigal disinterestedness, frustrated by its own ostentation, and the mode and nature of its claims;—the anxiety, the distrust, the jealousy, which more or less accompany all selfish affections, and are amongst the surest contradistinctions of mere fondness from true love, and which originate Lear's eager wish to enjoy his daughter's violent professions, whilst the inveterate habits of sovereignty convert the wish into claim and positive right, and an incompliance with it into crime and treason;—these facts, these passions, these moral verities, on which the whole tragedy is founded, are all prepared for, and will to the retrospect be found implied, in these first four or five lines of the play. They let us know that the trial is but a trick; and that the grossness of the old king's rage is in part the natural result of a silly trick suddenly and most unexpectedly baffled and disappointed.

It may here be worthy of notice, that Lear is the only serious performance of Shakspeare, the interest and situations of which are derived from the assumption of a gross improbability; whereas Beaumont and Fletcher's tragedies are, almost all of them, founded on some out of the way accident or exception to the general experience of mankind. But observe the matchless judgment of our Shakspeare. First, improbable as the conduct of Lear is in the first scene, yet it was an old story rooted in the popular faith,—a thing taken for granted already, and consequently without any of the effects of improbability. Secondly, it is merely the canvass for the characters and

passions,—a mere occasion for,—and not, in the manner of Beaumont and Fletcher, perpetually recurring as the cause, and *sine qua non* of,—the incidents and emotions. Let the first scene of this play have been lost, and let it only be understood that a fond father had been duped by hypocritical professions of love and duty on the part of two daughters to disinherit the third, previously, and deservedly, more dear to him;—and all the rest of the tragedy would retain its interest undiminished, and be perfectly intelligible. The accidental is nowhere the groundwork of the passions, but that which is catholic, which in all ages has been, and ever will be, close and native to the heart of man,—parental anguish from filial ingratitude, the genuineness of worth, though confined in bluntness, and the execrable vileness of a smooth iniquity. Perhaps I ought to have added the Merchant of Venice; but here too the same remarks apply. It was an old tale; and substitute any other danger than that of the pound of flesh (the circumstance in which the improbability lies), yet all the situations and the emotions appertaining to them remain equally excellent and appropriate. Whereas take away from the Mad Lover of Beaumont and Fletcher the fantastic hypothesis of his engagement to cut out his own heart, and have it presented to his mistress, and all the main scenes must go with it.

Kotzebue is the German Beaumont and Fletcher, without their poetic powers, and without their *vis comica*. But, like them, he always deduces his situations and passions from marvellous accidents, and the trick of bringing one part of our moral nature to counteract another; as our pity for misfortune and admiration of generosity and courage to combat our condemnation of guilt, as in adultery, robbery, and other heinous crimes;—and, like them too, he excels in his mode of telling a story clearly and interestingly, in a series of dramatic dialogues. Only the trick of making tragedy-heroes and heroines out of shopkeepers and barmaids was too low for the age, and too unpoetic for the genius, of Beaumont and Fletcher, inferior in every respect as they are to their great predecessor and contemporary. How inferior would they have appeared, had not Shakspeare existed for them to imitate;—which in every play, more or less, they do, and in their tragedies most glaringly:—and yet—(O shame!

shame!)—they miss no opportunity of sneering at the divine man, and sub-detracting from his merits!

To return to Lear. Having thus in the fewest words, and in a natural reply to as natural a question,—which yet answers the secondary purpose of attracting our attention to the difference or diversity between the characters of Cornwall and Albany,—provided the premisses and *data*, as it were, for our after insight into the mind and mood of the person, whose character, passions, and sufferings are the main subject-matter of the play;—from Lear, the *persona patiens* of his drama, Shakspeare passes without delay to the second in importance, the chief agent and prime mover, and introduces Edmund to our acquaintance, preparing us with the same felicity of judgment, and in the same easy and natural way, for his character in the seemingly casual communication of its origin and occasion. From the first drawing up of the curtain Edmund has stood before us in the united strength and beauty of earliest manhood. Our eyes have been questioning him. Gifted as he is with high advantages of person, and further endowed by nature with a powerful intellect and a strong energetic will, even without any concurrence of circumstances and accident, pride will necessarily be the sin that most easily besets him. But Edmund is also the known and acknowledged son of the princely Gloster: he, therefore, has both the germ of pride, and the conditions best fitted to evolve and ripen it into a predominant feeling. Yet hitherto no reason appears why it should be other than the not unusual pride of person, talent, and birth,—a pride auxiliary, if not akin, to many virtues, and the natural ally of honourable impulses. But alas! in his own presence his own father takes shame to himself for the frank avowal that he is his father,—he has 'blushed so often to acknowledge him that he is now brazed to it!' Edmund hears the circumstances of his birth spoken of with a most degrading and licentious levity,—his mother described as a wanton by her own paramour, and the remembrance of the animal sting, the low criminal gratifications connected with her wantonness and prostituted beauty, assigned as the reason, why 'the whoreson must be acknowledged!' This, and the consciousness of its notoriety; the gnawing conviction that every show of respect is an effort of courtesy, which recalls,

while it represses, a contrary feeling;—this is the ever trickling flow of wormwood and gall into the wounds of pride,—the corrosive *virus* which inoculates pride with a venom not its own, with envy, hatred, and a lust for that power which in its blaze of radiance would hide the dark spots on his disc,—with pangs of shame personally undeserved, and therefore felt as wrongs, and with a blind ferment of vindictive working towards the occasions and causes, especially towards a brother, whose stainless birth and lawful honours were the constant remembrancers of his own debasement, and were ever in the way to prevent all chance of its being unknown, or overlooked and forgotten. Add to this, that with excellent judgment, and provident for the claims of the moral sense,—for that which, relatively to the drama, is called poetic justice, and as the fittest means for reconciling the feelings of the spectators to the horrors of Gloster's after sufferings,—at least, of rendering them somewhat less unendurable;—(for I will not disguise my conviction, that in this one point the tragic in this play has been urged beyond the outermost mark and *ne plus ultra* of the dramatic)—Shakspeare has precluded all excuse and palliation of the guilt incurred by both the parents of the base-born Edmund, by Gloster's confession that he was at the time a married man, and already blest with a lawful heir of his fortunes. The mournful alienation of brotherly love, occasioned by the law of primogeniture in noble families, or rather by the unnecessary distinctions engrafted thereon, and this in children of the same stock, is still almost proverbial on the continent,—especially, as I know from my own observation, in the south of Europe,—and appears to have been scarcely less common in our own island before the Revolution of 1688, if we may judge from the characters and sentiments so frequent in our elder comedies. There is the younger brother, for instance, in Beaumont and Fletcher's play of the Scornful Lady, on the one side, and Oliver in Shakspeare's As You Like It, on the other. Need it be said how heavy an aggravation, in such a case, the stain of bastardy must have been, were it only that the younger brother was liable to hear his own dishonour and his mother's infamy related by his father with an excusing shrug of the shoulders, and in a tone betwixt waggery and shame!

By the circumstances here enumerated as so many predisposing causes, Edmund's character might well be deemed already sufficiently explained; and our minds prepared for it. But in this tragedy the story or fable constrained Shakspeare to introduce wickedness in an outrageous form in the persons of Regan and Goneril. He had read nature too heedfully not to know, that courage, intellect, and strength of character are the most impressive forms of power, and that to power in itself, without reference to any moral end, an inevitable admiration and complacency appertains, whether it be displayed in the conquests of a Buonaparte or Tamerlane, or in the foam and the thunder of a cataract. But in the exhibition of such a character it was of the highest importance to prevent the guilt from passing into utter monstrosity,—which again depends on the presence or absence of causes and temptations sufficient to account for the wickedness, without the necessity of recurring to a thorough fiendishness of nature for its origination. For such are the appointed relations of intellectual power to truth, and of truth to goodness, that it becomes both morally and poetically unsafe to present what is admirable,—what our nature compels us to admire —in the mind, and what is most detestable in the heart, as co-existing in the same individual without any apparent connection, or any modification of the one by the other. That Shakspeare has in one instance, that of Iago, approached to this, and that he has done it successfully, is, perhaps, the most astonishing proof of his genius, and the opulence of its resources. But in the present tragedy, in which he was compelled to present a Goneril and a Regan, it was most carefully to be avoided;—and therefore the only one conceivable addition to the inauspicious influences on the pre-formation of Edmund's character is given, in the information that all the kindly counteractions to the mischievous feelings of shame, which might have been derived from co-domestication with Edgar and their common father, had been cut off by his absence from home, and foreign education from boyhood to the present time, and a prospect of its continuance, as if to preclude all risk of his interference with the father's views for the elder and legitimate son:—

> He hath been out nine years, and away he shall again.

Act i. sc. 1.

Cor. Nothing, my lord.
Lear. Nothing ?
Cor. Nothing.
Lear. Nothing can come of nothing : speak again.
Cor. Unhappy that I am, I cannot heave
My heart into my mouth : I love your majesty
According to my bond ; nor more, nor less.

There is something of disgust at the ruthless hypocrisy of her sisters, and some little faulty admixture of pride and sullenness in Cordelia's 'Nothing ;' and her tone is well contrived, indeed, to lessen the glaring absurdity of Lear's conduct, but answers the yet more important purpose of forcing away the attention from the nursery-tale, the moment it has served its end, that of supplying the canvass for the picture. This is also materially furthered by Kent's opposition, which displays Lear's moral incapability of resigning the sovereign power in the very act of disposing of it. Kent is, perhaps, the nearest to perfect goodness in all Shakspeare's characters, and yet the most individualized. There is an extraordinary charm in his bluntness, which is that only of a nobleman arising from a contempt of overstrained courtesy, and combined with easy placability where goodness of heart is apparent. His passionate affection for, and fidelity to, Lear act on our feelings in Lear's own favour : virtue itself seems to be in company with him.

Ib. sc. 2. Edmund's speech :—

Who, in the lusty stealth of nature, take
More composition and fierce quality
Than doth, &c.

Warburton's note upon a quotation from Vanini.

Poor Vanini !—Any one but Warburton would have thought this precious passage more characteristic of Mr. Shandy than of atheism. If the fact really were so, (which it is not, but almost the contrary,) I do not see why the most confirmed theist might not very naturally utter the same wish. But it is proverbial that the youngest son in a large family is commonly the man of the greatest talents in it ; and as good an authority as Vanini has said —*incalescere in venerem ardentius, spei sobolis injuriosum esse.*

In this speech of Edmund you see, as soon as a man cannot reconcile himself to reason, how his conscience flies off by way of appeal to nature, who is sure upon such occasions never to find fault, and also how shame sharpens a predisposition in the heart to evil. For it is a profound moral, that shame will naturally generate guilt; the oppressed will be vindictive, like Shylock, and in the anguish of undeserved ignominy the delusion secretly springs up, of getting over the moral quality of an action by fixing the mind on the mere physical act alone.

Ib. Edmund's speech :—

This is the excellent foppery of the world! that, when we are sick in fortune, (often the surfeit of our own behaviour,) we make guilty of our disasters, the sun, the moon, and the stars, &c.

Thus scorn and misanthropy are often the anticipations and mouth-pieces of wisdom in the detection of superstitions. Both individuals and nations may be free from such prejudices by being below them, as well as by rising above them.

Ib. sc. 3. The Steward should be placed in exact antithesis to Kent, as the only character of utter irredeemable baseness in Shakspeare. Even in this the judgment and invention of the poet are very observable ;—for what else could the willing tool of a Goneril be ? Not a vice but this of baseness was left open to him.

Ib. sc. 4. In Lear old age is itself a character,—its natural imperfections being increased by life-long habits of receiving a prompt obedience. Any addition of individuality would have been unnecessary and painful; for the relations of others to him, of wondrous fidelity and of frightful ingratitude, alone sufficiently distinguish him. Thus Lear becomes the open and ample play-room of nature's passions.

Ib.

Knight. Since my young lady's going into France, Sir; the fool hath much pin'd away.

The Fool is no comic buffoon to make the groundlings laugh,—no forced condescension of Shakspeare's genius to the taste of his audience. Accordingly the poet prepares for his introduction, which he never does with any of his common clowns and fools, by bringing him into living connection with the pathos of the play. He is as wonderful

a creation as Caliban ;—his wild babblings, and inspired idiocy, articulate and gauge the horrors of the scene.

The monster Goneril prepares what is necessary, while the character of Albany renders a still more maddening grievance possible, namely, Regan and Cornwall in perfect sympathy of monstrosity. Not a sentiment, not an image, which can give pleasure on its own account, is admitted ; whenever these creatures are introduced, and they are brought forward as little as possible, pure horror reigns throughout. In this scene and in all the early speeches of Lear, the one general sentiment of filial ingratitude prevails as the main spring of the feelings ;—in this early stage the outward object causing the pressure on the mind, which is not yet sufficiently familiarized with the anguish for the imagination to work upon it.

Ib.

Gon. Do you mark that, my lord ?
Alb. I cannot be so partial, Goneril,
To the great love I bear you.
Gon. Pray you content, &c.

Observe the baffled endeavour of Goneril to act on the fears of Albany, and yet his passiveness, his *inertia* : he is not convinced, and yet he is afraid of looking into the thing. Such characters always yield to those who will take the trouble of governing them, or for them. Perhaps, the influence of a princess, whose choice of him had royalized his state, may be some little excuse for Albany's weakness.

Ib. sc. 5.

Lear. O let me not be mad, not mad, sweet heaven !
Keep me in temper ! I would not be mad !

The mind's own anticipation of madness ! The deepest tragic notes are often struck by a half sense of an impending blow. The Fool's conclusion of this act by a grotesque prattling seems to indicate the dislocation of feeling that has begun and is to be continued.

Act ii. sc. 1. Edmund's speech :—

He replied,
Thou unpossessing bastard ! &c.

Thus the secret poison in Edmund's own heart steals forth ; and then observe poor Gloster's —

Loyal and *natural* boy !

as if praising the crime of Edmund's birth !

Ib. Compare Regan's—

> What, did *my father's* godson seek your life?
> He whom *my father* named?

with the unfeminine violence of her—

> All vengeance comes too short, &c.

and yet no reference to the guilt, but only to the accident, which she uses as an occasion for sneering at her father. Regan is not, in fact, a greater monster than Goneril, but she has the power of casting more venom.

Ib. sc. 2. Cornwall's speech :—

> This is some fellow,
> Who, having been praised for bluntness, doth affect
> A saucy roughness, &c.

In thus placing these profound general truths in the mouths of such men as Cornwall, Edmund, Iago, &c. Shakspeare at once gives them utterance, and yet shows how indefinite their application is.

Ib. sc. 3. Edgar's assumed madness serves the great purpose of taking off part of the shock which would otherwise be caused by the true madness of Lear, and further displays the profound difference between the two. In every attempt at representing madness throughout the whole range of dramatic literature, with the single exception of Lear, it is mere lightheadedness, as especially in Otway. In Edgar's ravings Shakspeare all the while lets you see a fixed purpose, a practical end in view ;—in Lear's, there is only the brooding of the one anguish, an eddy without progression.

Ib. sc. 4. Lear's speech :—

> The king would speak with Cornwall ; the dear father
> Would with his daughter speak, &c.
> * * * *
> No, but not yet : may be he is not well, &c.

The strong interest now felt by Lear to try to find excuses for his daughter is most pathetic.

Ib. Lear's speech :—

> ———Beloved Regan,
> Thy sister's naught ;—O Regan, she hath tied
> Sharp-tooth'd unkindness, like a vulture, here.
> I can scarce speak to thee ;—thou'lt not believe
> With how deprav'd a quality—O Regan!

Reg. I pray you, Sir, take patience; I have hope,
You less know how to value her desert,
Than she to scant her duty.
Lear. Say, how is that?

Nothing is so heart-cutting as a cold unexpected defence or palliation of a cruelty passionately complained of, or so expressive of thorough hard-heartedness. And feel the excessive horror of Regan's 'O, Sir, you are old!'—and then her drawing from that universal object of reverence and indulgence the very reason for her frightful conclusion—

Say, you have wrong'd her!

All Lear's faults increase our pity for him. We refuse to know them otherwise than as means of his sufferings, and aggravations of his daughter's ingratitude.

Ib. Lear's speech:—

O, reason not the need: our basest beggars
Are in the poorest thing superfluous, &c.

Observe that the tranquillity which follows the first stunning of the blow permits Lear to reason.

Act iii. sc. 4. O, what a world's convention of agonies is here! All external nature in a storm, all moral nature convulsed,—the real madness of Lear, the feigned madness of Edgar, the babbling of the Fool, the desperate fidelity of Kent—surely such a scene was never conceived before or since! Take it but as a picture for the eye only, it is more terrific than any which a Michel Angelo, inspired by a Dante, could have conceived, and which none but a Michel Angelo could have executed. Or let it have been uttered to the blind, the howlings of nature would seem converted into the voice of conscious humanity. This scene ends with the first symptoms of positive derangement; and the intervention of the fifth scene is particularly judicious,—the interruption allowing an interval for Lear to appear in full madness in the sixth scene.

Ib. sc. 7. Gloster's blinding:—

What can I say of this scene?—There is my reluctance to think Shakspeare wrong, and yet—

Act iv. sc. 6. Lear's speech:—

Ha! Goneril!—with a white beard!—They flattered me like a dog; and told me, I had white hairs in my beard, ere the black

ones were there. To say *Ay* and *No* to every thing that I said! —Ay and No too was no good divinity. When the rain came to wet me once, &c.

The thunder recurs, but still at a greater distance from our feelings.

Ib. sc. 7. Lear's speech :—

> Where have I been ? Where am I ?—Fair daylight ?—
> I am mightily abused.—I should even die with pity
> To see another thus, &c.

How beautifully the affecting return of Lear to reason, and the mild pathos of these speeches prepare the mind for the last sad, yet sweet, consolation of the aged sufferer's death !

HAMLET.

HAMLET was the play, or rather Hamlet himself was the character, in the intuition and exposition of which I first made my turn for philosophical criticism, and especially for insight into the genius of Shakspeare, noticed. This happened first amongst my acquaintances, as Sir George Beaumont will bear witness; and subsequently, long before Schlegel had delivered at Vienna the lectures on Shakspeare, which he afterwards published, I had given on the same subject eighteen lectures substantially the same, proceeding from the very same point of view, and deducing the same conclusions, so far as I either then agreed, or now agree, with him. I gave these lectures at the Royal Institution, before six or seven hundred auditors of rank and eminence, in the spring of the same year, in which Sir Humphrey Davy, a fellow-lecturer, made his great revolutionary discoveries in chemistry. Even in detail the coincidence of Schlegel with my lectures was so extraordinary, that all who at a later period heard the same words, taken by me from my notes of the lectures at the Royal Institution, concluded a borrowing on my part from Schlegel. Mr. Hazlitt, whose hatred of me is in such an inverse ratio to my zealous kindness towards him, as to be defended by his warmest admirer, Charles Lamb—(who, God bless him ! besides his characteristic obstinacy of adherence to old friends, as long at least as they are at all

down in the world, is linked as by a charm to Hazlitt's conversation)—only as 'frantic';—Mr. Hazlitt, I say, himself replied to an assertion of my plagiarism from Schlegel in these words;—"That is a lie; for I myself heard the very same character of Hamlet from Coleridge before he went to Germany, and when he had neither read nor could read a page of German!" Now Hazlitt was on a visit to me at my cottage at Nether Stowey, Somerset, in the summer of the year 1798, in the September of which year I first was out of sight of the shores of Great Britain. Recorded by me, S. T. Coleridge, 7th January, 1819.

The seeming inconsistencies in the conduct and character of Hamlet have long exercised the conjectural ingenuity of critics; and, as we are always loth to suppose that the cause of defective apprehension is in ourselves, the mystery has been too commonly explained by the very easy process of setting it down as in fact inexplicable, and by resolving the phenomenon into a misgrowth or *lusus* of the capricious and irregular genius of Shakspeare. The shallow and stupid arrogance of these vulgar and indolent decisions I would fain do my best to expose. I believe the character of Hamlet may be traced to Shakspeare's deep and accurate science in mental philosophy. Indeed, that this character must have some connection with the common fundamental laws of our nature may be assumed from the fact, that Hamlet has been the darling of every country in which the literature of England has been fostered. In order to understand him, it is essential that we should reflect on the constitution of our own minds. Man is distinguished from the brute animals in proportion as thought prevails over sense: but in the healthy processes of the mind, a balance is constantly maintained between the impressions from outward objects and the inward operations of the intellect;—for if there be an overbalance in the contemplative faculty, man thereby becomes the creature of mere meditation, and loses his natural power of action. Now one of Shakspeare's modes of creating characters is, to conceive any one intellectual or moral faculty in morbid excess, and then to place himself, Shakspeare, thus mutilated or diseased, under given circumstances. In Hamlet he seems to have wished to exemplify the moral necessity of a due balance between our attention to the objects of our senses, and our meditation on the workings of our

minds,—an *equilibrium* between the real and the imaginary worlds. In Hamlet this balance is disturbed: his thoughts, and the images of his fancy, are far more vivid than his actual perceptions, and his very perceptions, instantly passing through the *medium* of his contemplations, acquire, as they pass, a form and a colour not naturally their own. Hence we see a great, an almost enormous, intellectual activity, and a proportionate aversion to real action, consequent upon it, with all its symptoms and accompanying qualities. This character Shakspeare places in circumstances, under which it is obliged to act on the spur of the moment:—Hamlet is brave and careless of death; but he vacillates from sensibility, and procrastinates from thought, and loses the power of action in the energy of resolve. Thus it is that this tragedy presents a direct contrast to that of Macbeth; the one proceeds with the utmost slowness, the other with a crowded and breathless rapidity.

The effect of this overbalance of the imaginative power is beautifully illustrated in the everlasting broodings and superfluous activities of Hamlet's mind, which, unseated from its healthy relation, is constantly occupied with the world within, and abstracted from the world without,—giving substance to shadows, and throwing a mist over all common-place actualities. It is the nature of thought to be indefinite;—definiteness belongs to external imagery alone. Hence it is that the sense of sublimity arises, not from the sight of an outward object, but from the beholder's reflection upon it;—not from the sensuous impression, but from the imaginative reflex. Few have seen a celebrated waterfall without feeling something akin to disappointment: it is only subsequently that the image comes back full into the mind, and brings with it a train of grand or beautiful associations. Hamlet feels this; his senses are in a state of trance, and he looks upon external things as hieroglyphics. His soliloquy—

> O! that this too too solid flesh would melt, &c.

springs from that craving after the indefinite—for that which is not—which most easily besets men of genius; and the self-delusion common to this temper of mind is finely exemplified in the character which Hamlet gives of himself:—

—It cannot be
But I am pigeon-livered, and lack gall
To make oppression bitter.

He mistakes the seeing his chains for the breaking them, delays action till action is of no use, and dies the victim of mere circumstance and accident.

There is a great significancy in the names of Shakspeare's plays. In the Twelfth Night, Midsummer Night's Dream, As You Like It, and Winter's Tale, the total effect is produced by a co-ordination of the characters as in a wreath of flowers. But in Coriolanus, Lear, Romeo and Juliet, Hamlet, Othello, &c. the effect arises from the subordination of all to one, either as the prominent person, or the principal object. Cymbeline is the only exception; and even that has its advantages in preparing the audience for the chaos of time, place, and costume, by throwing the date back into a fabulous king's reign.

But as of more importance, so more striking, is the judgment displayed by our truly dramatic poet, as well as poet of the drama, in the management of his first scenes. With the single exception of Cymbeline, they either place before us at one glance both the past and the future in some effect, which implies the continuance and full agency of its cause, as in the feuds and party-spirit of the servants of the two houses in the first scene of Romeo and Juliet; or in the degrading passion for shews and public spectacles, and the overwhelming attachment for the newest successful war-chief in the Roman people, already become a populace, contrasted with the jealousy of the nobles in Julius Cæsar;—or they at once commence the action so as to excite a curiosity for the explanation in the following scenes, as in the storm of wind and waves, and the boatswain in the Tempest, instead of anticipating our curiosity, as in most other first scenes, and in too many other first acts;—or they act, by contrast of diction suited to the characters, at once to heighten the effect, and yet to give a naturalness to the language and rhythm of the principal personages, either as that of Prospero and Miranda by the appropriate lowness of the style,—or as in King John, by the equally appropriate stateliness of official harangues or narratives, so that the after blank verse seems to belong to the rank and quality of the speakers, and not to the poet;—or they strike at once the key-note, and give the

predominant spirit of the play, as in the Twelfth Night and in Macbeth ;—or finally, the first scene comprises all these advantages at once, as in Hamlet.

Compare the easy language of common life, in which this drama commences, with the direful music and wild wayward rhythm and abrupt lyrics of the opening of Macbeth. The tone is quite familiar ;—there is no poetic description of night, no elaborate information conveyed by one speaker to another of what both had immediately before their senses—(such as the first distich in Addison's Cato, which is a translation into poetry of 'Past four o'clock and a dark morning !') ;—and yet nothing bordering on the comic on the one hand, nor any striving of the intellect on the other. It is precisely the language of sensation among men who feared no charge of effeminacy for feeling what they had no want of resolution to bear. Yet the armour, the dead silence, the watchfulness that first interrupts it, the welcome relief of the guard, the cold, the broken expressions of compelled attention to bodily feelings still under control—all excellently accord with, and prepare for, the after gradual rise into tragedy ;—but, above all, into a tragedy, the interest of which is as eminently *ad et apud intra*, as that of Macbeth is directly *ad extra*.

In all the best attested stories of ghosts and visions, as in that of Brutus, of Archbishop Cranmer, that of Benvenuto Cellini recorded by himself, and the vision of Galileo communicated by him to his favourite pupil Torricelli, the ghost-seers were in a state of cold or chilling damp from without, and of anxiety inwardly. It has been with all of them as with Francisco on his guard,—alone, in the depth and silence of the night ;—'twas bitter cold, and they were sick at heart, and *not a mouse stirring*.' The attention to minute sounds,—naturally associated with the recollection of minute objects, and the more familiar and trifling, the more impressive from the unusualness of their producing any impression at all —gives a philosophic pertinency to this last image ; but it has likewise its dramatic use and purpose. For its commonness in ordinary conversation tends to produce the sense of reality, and at once hides the poet, and yet approximates the reader or spectator to that state in which the highest poetry will appear, and in its component

parts, though not in the whole composition, really is, the language of nature. If I should not speak it, I feel that I should be thinking it;—the voice only is the poet's,—the words are my own. That Shakspeare meant to put an effect in the actor's power in the very first words—"Who's there?"—is evident fromt he impatience expressed by the startled Francisco in the words that follow—"Nay, answer me: stand and unfold yourself." A brave man is never so peremptory, as when he fears that he is afraid. Observe the gradual transition from the silence and the still recent habit of listening in Francisco's—"I think I hear them"—to the more cheerful call out, which a good actor would observe, in the—"Stand ho! Who is there?" Bernardo's inquiry after Horatio, and the repetition of his name and in his own presence indicate a respect or an eagerness that implies him as one of the persons who are in the foreground; and the scepticism attributed to him,—

> Horatio says, 'tis but our fantasy;
> And will not let belief take hold of him—

prepares us for Hamlet's after eulogy on him as one whose blood and judgment were happily commingled. The actor should also be careful to distinguish the expectation and gladness of Bernardo's 'Welcome, Horatio!' from the mere courtesy of his 'Welcome, good Marcellus!'

Now observe the admirable indefiniteness of the first opening out of the occasion of all this anxiety. The preparation informative of the audience is just as much as was precisely necessary, and no more;—it begins with the uncertainty appertaining to a question:—

> *Mar.* What, has *this thing* appear'd again to-night?—

Even the word 'again' has its *credibilizing* effect. Then Horatio, the representative of the ignorance of the audience, not himself, but by Marcellus to Bernardo, anticipates the common solution—"'tis but our fantasy!' upon which Marcellus rises into

> This dreaded sight, twice seen of us—

which immediately afterwards becomes 'this apparition,' and that, too, an intelligent spirit, that is, to be spoken to! Then comes the confirmation of Horatio's disbelief;—

> Tush! tush! 'twill not appear!—

and the silence, with which the scene opened, is again restored in the shivering feeling of Horatio sitting down, at such a time, and with the two eye-witnesses, to hear a story of a ghost, and that, too, of a ghost which had appeared twice before at the very same hour. In the deep feeling which Bernardo has of the solemn nature of what he is about to relate, he makes an effort to master his own imaginative terrors by an elevation of style,—itself a continuation of the effort,—and by turning off from the apparition, as from something which would force him too deeply into himself, to the outward objects, the realities of nature, which had accompanied it :—

> *Ber.* Last night of all,
> When yon same star, that's westward from the pole
> Had made his course to illume that part of heaven
> Where now it burns, Marcellus and myself,
> The bell then beating one—

This passage seems to contradict the critical law that what is told, makes a faint impression compared with what is beholden ; for it does indeed convey to the mind more than the eye can see ; whilst the interruption of the narrative at the very moment when we are most intensely listening for the sequel, and have our thoughts diverted from the dreaded sight in expectation of the desired, yet almost dreaded, tale—this gives all the suddenness and surprise of the original appearance ;—

> *Mar.* Peace, break thee off ; look, where it comes again !—

Note the judgment displayed in having the two persons present, who, as having seen the Ghost before, are naturally eager in confirming their former opinions,—whilst the sceptic is silent, and after having been twice addressed by his friends, answers with two hasty syllables—'Most like,' —and a confession of horror :

> —It harrows me with fear and wonder.

O heaven! words are wasted on those who feel, and to those who do not feel the exquisite judgment of Shakspeare in this scene, what can be said ?—Hume himself could not but have had faith in this Ghost dramatically, let his anti-ghostism have been as strong as Sampson against other ghosts less powerfully raised.

Act i. sc. 1.

Mar. Good now, sit down, and tell me, he that knows,
Why this same strict and most observant watch, &c.

How delightfully natural is the transition to the retrospective narrative! And observe, upon the Ghost's reappearance, how much Horatio's courage is increased by having translated the late individual spectator into general thought and past experience,—and the sympathy of Marcellus and Bernardo with his patriotic surmises in daring to strike at the Ghost; whilst in a moment, upon its vanishing the former solemn awe-stricken feeling returns upon them:—

We do it wrong, being so majestical,
To offer it the show of violence.—

Ib. Horatio's speech:—

I have heard,
The cock, that is the trumpet to the morn,
Doth with his lofty and shrill-sounding throat
Awake the god of day, &c.

No Addison could be more careful to be poetical in diction than Shakspeare in providing the grounds and sources of its propriety. But how to elevate a thing almost mean by its familiarity, young poets may learn in this treatment of the cock-crow.

Ib. Horatio's speech:—

And, by my advice,
Let us impart what we have seen to-night
Unto young Hamlet; for, upon my life,
This spirit, dumb to us, will speak to him.

Note the inobtrusive and yet fully adequate mode of introducing the main character, 'young Hamlet,' upon whom is transferred all the interest excited for the acts and concerns of the king his father.

Ib. sc. 2. The audience are now relieved by a change of scene to the royal court, in order that Hamlet may not have to take up the leavings of exhaustion. In the king's speech, observe the set and pedantically antithetic form of the sentences when touching that which galled the heels of conscience,—the strain of undignified rhetoric,—and yet in what follows concerning the public weal, a certain appropriate majesty. Indeed was he not a royal brother?—

Ib. King's speech :—

And now, Laertes, what's the news with you ? &c.

Thus with great art Shakspeare introduces a most important, but still subordinate character first, Laertes, who is yet thus graciously treated in consequence of the assistance given to the election of the late king's brother instead of his son by Polonius.

Ib.

Ham. A little more than kin, and less than kind.
King. How is it that the clouds still hang on you ?
Ham. Not so, my lord, I am too much i' the sun.

Hamlet opens his mouth with a playing on words, the complete absence of which throughout characterizes Macbeth. This playing on words may be attributed to many causes or motives, as either to an exuberant activity of mind, as in the higher comedy of Shakspeare generally ; —or to an imitation of it as a mere fashion, as if it were said—'Is not this better than groaning ?'—or to a contemptuous exultation in minds vulgarized and overset by their success, as in the poetic instance of Milton's Devils in the battle ;—or it is the language of resentment, as is familiar to every one who has witnessed the quarrels of the lower orders, where there is invariably a profusion of punning invective, whence, perhaps, nicknames have in a considerable degree sprung up ;—or it is the language of suppressed passion, and especially of a hardly smothered personal dislike. The first and last of these combine in Hamlet's case ; and I have little doubt that Farmer is right in supposing the equivocation carried on in the expression 'too much i' the sun,' or son.

Ib.

Ham. Ay, madam, it is common.

Here observe Hamlet's delicacy to his mother, and how the suppression prepares him for the overflow in the next speech, in which his character is more developed by bringing forward his aversion to externals, and which betrays his habit of brooding over the world within him, coupled with a prodigality of beautiful words, which are the half embodyings of thought, and are more than thought, and have an outness, a reality *sui generis*, and yet retain their correspondence and shadowy affinity to the images and movements within. Note also Hamlet's silence to the

long speech of the king which follows, and his respectful, but general, answer to his mother.

Ib. Hamlet's first soliloquy :—

> O, that this too too solid flesh would melt,
> Thaw, and resolve itself into a dew ! &c.

This *tædium vitæ* is a common oppression on minds cast in the Hamlet mould, and is caused by disproportionate mental exertion, which necessitates exhaustion of bodily feeling. Where there is a just coincidence of external and internal action, pleasure is always the result ; but where the former is deficient, and the mind's appetency of the ideal is unchecked, realities will seem cold and unmoving. In such cases, passion combines itself with the indefinite alone. In this mood of his mind the relation of the appearance of his father's spirit in arms is made all at once to Hamlet :—it is—Horatio's speech, in particular—a perfect model of the true style of dramatic narrative ;—the purest poetry, and yet in the most natural language, equally remote from the ink-horn and the plough.

Ib. sc. 3. This scene must be regarded as one of Shakspeare's lyric movements in the play, and the skill with which it is interwoven with the dramatic parts is peculiarly an excellence of our poet. You experience the sensation of a pause without the sense of a stop. You will observe in Ophelia's short and general answer to the long speech of Laertes the natural carelessness of innocence, which cannot think such a code of cautions and prudences necessary to its own preservation.

Ib. Speech of Polonius :—(in Stockdale's edition.)

> Or (not to crack the wind of the poor phrase,)
> Wronging it thus, you'll tender me a fool.

I suspect this 'wronging' is here used much in the same sense as 'wringing' or 'wrenching' ; and that the parenthesis should be extended to 'thus.' [1]

Ib. Speech of Polonius :—

> ——How prodigal the soul
> Lends the tongue vows :—these blazes, daughter, &c.

A spondee has, I doubt not, dropped out of the text. Either insert 'Go to' after 'vows' ;—

[1] It is so pointed in the modern editions.—*Ed.*

Lends the tongue vows: Go to, these blazes, daughter—

or read

Lends the tongue vows:—These blazes, daughter, mark you—

Shakspeare never introduces a catalectic line without intending an equivalent to the foot omitted in the pauses, or the dwelling emphasis, or the diffused retardation. I do not, however, deny that a good actor might by employing the last mentioned means, namely, the retardation, or solemn knowing drawl, supply the missing spondee with good effect. But I do not believe that in this or any other of the foregoing speeches of Polonius, Shakspeare meant to bring out the senility or weakness of that personage's mind. In the great ever-recurring dangers and duties of life, where to distinguish the fit objects for the application of the maxims collected by the experience of a long life, requires no fineness of tact, as in the admonitions to his son and daughter, Polonius is uniformly made respectable. But if an actor were even capable of catching these shades in the character, the pit and the gallery would be malcontent at their exhibition. It is to Hamlet that Polonius is, and is meant to be, contemptible, because in inwardness and uncontrollable activity of movement, Hamlet's mind is the logical contrary to that of Polonius, and besides, as I have observed before, Hamlet dislikes the man as false to his true allegiance in the matter of the succession to the crown.

Ib. sc. 4. The unimportant conversation with which this scene opens is a proof of Shakspeare's minute knowledge of human nature. It is a well established fact, that on the brink of any serious enterprise, or event of moment, men almost invariably endeavour to elude the pressure of their own thoughts by turning aside to trivial objects and familiar circumstances: thus this dialogue on the platform begins with remarks on the coldness of the air, and inquiries, obliquely connected, indeed, with the expected hour of the visitation, but thrown out in a seeming vacuity of topics, as to the striking of the clock and so forth. The same desire to escape from the impending thought is carried on in Hamlet's account of, and moralizing on, the Danish custom of wassailing: he runs off from the particular to the universal, and, in his repugnance to personal and individual concerns, escapes, as it were, from himself in generaliza-

tions, and smothers the impatience and uneasy feelings of the moment in abstract reasoning. Besides this, another purpose is answered;—for by thus entangling the attention of the audience in the nice distinctions and parenthetical sentences of this speech of Hamlet's, Shakspeare takes them completely by surprise on the appearance of the Ghost, which comes upon them in all the suddenness of its visionary character. Indeed, no modern writer would have dared, like Shakspeare, to have preceded this last visitation by two distinct appearances,—or could have contrived that the third should rise upon the former two in impressiveness and solemnity of interest.

But in addition to all the other excellences of Hamlet's speech concerning the wassel-music—so finely revealing the predominant idealism, the ratiocinative meditativeness, of his character—it has the advantage of giving nature and probability to the impassioned continuity of the speech instantly directed to the Ghost. The *momentum* had been given to his mental activity; the full current of the thoughts and words had set in, and the very forgetfulness, in the fervour of his argumentation, of the purpose for which he was there, aided in preventing the appearance from benumbing the mind. Consequently, it acted as a new impulse,—a sudden stroke which increased the velocity of the body already in motion, whilst it altered the direction. The co-presence of Horatio, Marcellus, and Bernardo is most judiciously contrived; for it renders the courage of Hamlet and his impetuous eloquence perfectly intelligible. The knowledge,—the unthought of consciousness,—the sensation,—of human auditors,—of flesh and blood sympathists—acts as a support and a stimulation *a tergo*, while the front of the mind, the whole consciousness of the speaker, is filled, yea, absorbed, by the apparition. Add too, that the apparition itself has by its previous appearances been brought nearer to a thing of this world. This accrescence of objectivity in a Ghost that yet retains all its ghostly attributes and fearful subjectivity, is truly wonderful.

Ib. sc. 5. Hamlet's speech:—

> O all you host of heaven! O earth! What else?
> And shall I couple hell?—

I remember nothing equal to this burst unless it be the

first speech of Prometheus in the Greek drama, after the exit of Vulcan and the two Afrites. But Shakspeare alone could have produced the vow of Hamlet to make his memory a blank of all maxims and generalized truths, that 'observation had copied there,'—followed immediately by the speaker noting down the generalized fact,

> That one may smile, and smile, and be a villain!

Ib.

> *Mar.* Hillo, ho, ho, my lord!
> *Ham.* Hillo, ho, ho, boy! come bird, come, &c.

This part of the scene after Hamlet's interview with the Ghost has been charged with an improbable eccentricity. But the truth is, that after the mind has been stretched beyond its usual pitch and tone, it must either sink into exhaustion and inanity, or seek relief by change. It is thus well known, that persons conversant in deeds of cruelty contrive to escape from conscience by connecting something of the ludicrous with them, and by inventing grotesque terms and a certain technical phraseology to disguise the horror of their practices. Indeed, paradoxical as it may appear, the terrible by a law of the human mind always touches on the verge of the ludicrous. Both arise from the perception of something out of the common order of things—something, in fact, out of its place; and if from this we can abstract danger, the uncommonness will alone remain, and the sense of the ridiculous be excited. The close alliance of these opposites—they are not contraries—appears from the circumstance, that laughter is equally the expression of extreme anguish and horror as of joy: as there are tears of sorrow and tears of joy, so is there a laugh of terror and a laugh of merriment. These complex causes will naturally have produced in Hamlet the disposition to escape from his own feelings of the overwhelming and supernatural by a wild transition to the ludicrous, —a sort of cunning bravado, bordering on the flights of delirium. For you may, perhaps, observe that Hamlet's wildness is but half false; he plays that subtle trick of pretending to act only when he is very near really being what he acts.

The subterraneous speeches of the Ghost are hardly defensible:—but I would call your attention to the characteristic difference between this Ghost, as a superstition

connected with the most mysterious truths of revealed religion,—and Shakspeare's consequent reverence in his treatment of it,—and the foul earthly witcheries and wild language in Macbeth.

Act ii. sc. 1. Polonius and Reynaldo.

In all things dependent on, or rather made up of, fine address, the manner is no more or otherwise rememberable than the light motions, steps, and gestures of youth and health. But this is almost everything :—no wonder, therefore if that which can be put down by rule in the memory should appear to us as mere poring, maudlin, cunning,—slyness blinking through the watery eye of superannuation. So in this admirable scene, Polonius, who is throughout the skeleton of his own former skill and statecraft, hunts the trail of policy at a dead scent, supplied by the weak fever-smell in his own nostrils.

Ib. sc. 2. Speech of Polonius :—

> My liege, and madam, to expostulate, &c.

Warburton's note.

> Then as to the jingles, and play on words, let us but look into the sermons of Dr. Donne (the wittiest man of that age) and we shall find them full of this vein.

I have, and that most carefully, read Dr. Donne's sermons, and find none of these jingles. The great art of an orator—to make whatever he talks of appear of importance — this, indeed, Donne has effected with consummate skill.

Ib.

> *Ham.* Excellent well ;
> You are a fishmonger.

That is, you are sent to fish out this secret. This is Hamlet's own meaning.

Ib.

> *Ham.* For if the sun breeds maggots in a dead dog,
> Being a god, kissing carrion—

These purposely obscure lines, I rather think, refer to some thought in Hamlet's mind, contrasting the lovely daughter with such a tedious old fool, her father, as he, Hamlet, represents Polonius to himself :—'Why, fool as he is, he is some degrees in rank above a dead dog's carcase ; and if the sun, being a god that kisses carrion, can raise life out

of a dead dog,—why may not good fortune, that favours fools, have raised a lovely girl out of this dead-alive old fool?' Warburton is often led astray, in his interpretations, by his attention to general positions without the due Shakspearian reference to what is probably passing in the mind of his speaker, characteristic, and expository of his particular character and present mood. The subsequent passage,—

O Jephtha, judge of Israel! what a treasure hadst thou!

is confirmatory of my view of these lines.

Ib.

Ham. You cannot, Sir, take from me any thing that I will more willingly part withal; except my life, except my life, except my life.

This repetition strikes me as most admirable.

Ib.

Ham. Then are our beggars, bodies; and our monarchs, and out-stretched heroes, the beggars' shadows.

I do not understand this; and Shakspeare seems to have intended the meaning not to be more than snatched at:—'By my fay, I cannot reason!'

Ib.

The rugged Pyrrhus—he whose sable arms, &c.

This admirable substitution of the epic for the dramatic, giving such a reality to the impassioned dramatic diction of Shakspeare's own dialogue, and authorized too, by the actual style of the tragedies before his time (Porrex and Ferrex, Titus Andronicus, &c.)—is well worthy of notice. The fancy, that a burlesque was intended, sinks below criticism: the lines, as epic narrative, are superb.

In the thoughts, and even in the separate parts of the diction, this description is highly poetical: in truth, taken by itself, that is its fault that it is too poetical!—the language of lyric vehemence and epic pomp, and not of the drama. But if Shakspeare had made the diction truly dramatic, where would have been the contrast between Hamlet and the play in Hamlet?

Ib.

—— had seen the *mobled* queen, &c.

A mob-cap is still a word in common use for a morning

cap, which conceals the whole head of hair, and passes under the chin. It is nearly the same as the night-cap, that is, it is an imitation of it, so as to answer the purpose ('I am not drest for company'), and yet reconciling it with neatness and perfect purity.

Ib. Hamlet's soliloquy :

> O, what a rogue and peasant slave am I ! &c.

This is Shakspeare's own attestation to the truth of the idea of Hamlet which I have before put forth.

Ib.

> The spirit that I have seen,
> May be a devil : and the devil hath power
> To assume a pleasing shape ; yea, and, perhaps
> Out of my weakness, and my melancholy,
> (As he is very potent with such spirits)
> Abuses me to damn me.

See Sir Thomas Brown :

> I believe———that those apparitions and ghosts of departed persons are not the wandering souls of men, but the unquiet walks of devils, prompting and suggesting us unto mischief, blood and villany, instilling and stealing into our hearts, that the blessed spirits are not at rest in their graves, but wander solicitous of the affairs of the world. *Relig. Med.* Pt. I. Sect. 37.

Act iii. sc. 1. Hamlet's soliloquy :

> To be, or not to be, that is the question, &c.

This speech is of absolutely universal interest,—and yet to which of all Shakspeare's characters could it have been appropriately given but Hamlet ? For Jaques it would have been too deep, and for Iago too habitual a communion with the heart ; which in every man belongs, or ought to belong, to all mankind.

Ib.

> The undiscover'd country, from whose bourne
> No traveller returns.—

Theobald's note in defence of the supposed contradiction of this in the apparition of the Ghost.

O miserable defender ! If it be necessary to remove the apparent contradiction,—if it be not rather a great beauty,—surely, it were easy to say, that no traveller returns to this world, as to his home, or abiding-place.

Ib.

Ham. Ha, ha! are you honest?
Oph. My lord?
Ham. Are you fair?

Here it is evident that the penetrating Hamlet perceives, from the strange and forced manner of Ophelia, that the sweet girl was not acting a part of her own, but was a decoy; and his after speeches are not so much directed to her as to the listeners and spies. Such a discovery in a mood so anxious and irritable accounts for a certain harshness in him;—and yet a wild up-working of love, sporting with opposites in a wilful self-tormenting strain of irony, is perceptible throughout. 'I did love you once:' —'I lov'd you not:'—and particularly in his enumeration of the faults of the sex from which Ophelia is so free, that the mere freedom therefrom constitutes her character. Note Shakspeare's charm of composing the female character by the absence of characters, that is, marks and out-juttings.

Ib. Hamlet's speech:—

I say, we will have no more marriages: those that are married already, all but one, shall live: the rest shall keep as they are.

Observe this dallying with the inward purpose, characteristic of one who had not brought his mind to the steady acting point. He would fain sting the uncle's mind; —but to stab his body!—The soliloquy of Ophelia, which follows, is the perfection of love—so exquisitely unselfish!

Ib. sc. 2. This dialogue of Hamlet with the players is one of the happiest instances of Shakspeare's power of diversifying the scene while he is carrying on the plot.

Ib.

Ham. My lord, you play'd once i' the university, you say? (*To Polonius.*)

To have kept Hamlet's love for Ophelia before the audience in any direct form, would have made a breach in the unity of the interest;—but yet to the thoughtful reader it is suggested by his spite to poor Polonius, whom he cannot let rest.

Ib. The style of the interlude here is distinguished from the real dialogue by rhyme, as in the first interview with the players by epic verse.

Ib.

Ros. My lord, you once did love me.
Ham. *So* I do still, by these pickers and stealers.

I never heard an actor give this word 'so' its proper emphasis. Shakspeare's meaning is—'lov'd you ? Hum ! —*so* I do still, &c.' There has been no change in my opinion :—I think as ill of you as I did. Else Hamlet tells an ignoble falsehood, and a useless one, as the last speech to Guildenstern—'Why, look you now,' &c.—proves.

Ib. Hamlet's soliloquy :—

Now could I drink hot blood,
And do such bitter business as the day
Would quake to look on.

The utmost at which Hamlet arrives, is a disposition, a mood, to do something :—but what to do, is still left undecided, while every word he utters tends to betray his disguise. Yet observe how perfectly equal to any call of the moment is Hamlet, let it only not be for the future.

Ib. sc. 4. Speech of Polonius. Polonius's volunteer obtrusion of himself into this business, while it is appropriate to his character, still itching after former importance, removes all likelihood that Hamlet should suspect his presence, and prevents us from making his death injure Hamlet in our opinion.

Ib. The king's speech :—

O, my offence is rank, it smells to heaven, &c.

This speech well marks the difference between crime and guilt of habit. The conscience here is still admitted to audience. Nay, even as an audible soliloquy, it is far less improbable than is supposed by such as have watched men only in the beaten road of their feelings. But the final—'all may be well !' is remarkable ;—the degree of merit attributed by the self-flattering soul to its own struggle, though baffled, and to the indefinite half-promise, half-command, to persevere in religious duties. The solution is in the divine *medium* of the Christian doctrine of expiation :—not what you have done, but what you are, must determine.

Ib. Hamlet's speech :—

> Now might I do it, pat, now he is praying :
> And now I'll do it :—And so he goes to heaven :
> And so am I revenged ? That would be scann'd, &c.

Dr. Johnson's mistaking of the marks of reluctance and procrastination for impetuous, horror-striking, fiendishness ! — Of such importance is it to understand the germ of a character. But the interval taken by Hamlet's speech is truly awful ! And then—

> My words fly up, my thoughts remain below :
> Words, without thoughts, never to heaven go,—

O what a lesson concerning the essential difference between wishing and willing, and the folly of all motive-mongering, while the individual self remains !

Ib. sc. 4.

> *Ham.* A bloody deed ;—almost as bad, good mother,
> As kill a king, and marry with his brother.
> *Queen.* As kill a king ?

I confess that Shakspeare has left the character of the Queen in an unpleasant perplexity. Was she, or was she not, conscious of the fratricide ?

Act iv. sc. 2.

> *Ros.* Take you me for a spunge, my lord ?
> *Ham.* Ay, Sir ; that soaks up the King's countenance, his rewards, his authorities, &c.

Hamlet's madness is made to consist in the free utterance of all the thoughts that had passed through his mind before ;—in fact, in telling home-truths.

Act iv. sc. 5. Ophelia's singing. O, note the conjunction here of these two thoughts that had never subsisted in disjunction, the love for Hamlet, and her filial love, with the guileless floating on the surface of her pure imagination of the cautions so lately expressed, and the fears not too delicately avowed, by her father and brother, concerning the dangers to which her honour lay exposed. Thought, affliction, passion, murder itself—she turns to favour and prettiness. This play of association is instanced in the close :—

> My brother shall know of it, and so I thank you for your good counsel.

Ib. Gentleman's speech :—

> And as the world were now but to begin
> Antiquity forgot, custom not known,
> The ratifiers and props of every word—
> They cry, &c.

Fearful and self-suspicious as I always feel, when I seem to see an error of judgment in Shakspeare, yet I cannot reconcile the cool, and, as Warburton calls it, 'rational and consequential,' reflection in these lines with the anonymousness, or the alarm, of this Gentleman or Messenger, as he is called in other editions.

Ib. King's speech :—

> There's such divinity doth hedge a king,
> That treason can but peep to what it would,
> Acts little of his will.

Proof, as indeed all else is, that Shakspeare never intended us to see the King with Hamlet's eyes ; though, I suspect, the managers have long done so.

Ib. Speech of Laertes :—

> To hell, allegiance ! vows, to the blackest devil !
>
> Laertes is a *good* character, but, &c. WARBURTON.

Mercy on Warburton's notion of goodness ! Please to refer to the seventh scene of this act ;—

> I will do it ;
> And for that purpose I'll anoint my sword, &c.

uttered by Laertes after the King's description of Hamlet ;—

> He being remiss,
> Most generous, and free from all contriving,
> Will not peruse the foils.

Yet I acknowledge that Shakspeare evidently wishes, as much as possible, to spare the character of Laertes,—to break the extreme turpitude of his consent to become an agent and accomplice of the King's treachery ;—and to this end he re-introduces Ophelia at the close of this scene to afford a probable stimulus of passion in her brother.

Ib. sc. 6. Hamlet's capture by the pirates. This is almost the only play of Shakspeare, in which mere accidents, independent of all will, form an essential part of the plot ; —but here how judiciously in keeping with the character

of the over-meditative Hamlet, ever at last determined by accident or by a fit of passion!

Ib. sc. 7. Note how the King first awakens Laertes's vanity by praising the reporter, and then gratifies it by the report itself, and finally points it by—

> Sir, this report of his
> Did Hamlet so envenom with his envy!—

Ib. King's speech:

> For goodness, growing to a *pleurisy*,
> Dies in his own too much.

Theobald's note from Warburton, who conjectures 'plethory.'

I rather think that Shakspeare meant 'pleurisy,' but involved in it the thought of *plethora*, as supposing pleurisy to arise from too much blood; otherwise I cannot explain the following line—

> And then this *should* is like a spendthrift sigh,
> That hurts by easing.

In a stitch in the side every one must have heaved a sigh that 'hurt by easing.'

Since writing the above I feel confirmed that 'pleurisy' is the right word; for I find that in the old medical dictionaries the pleurisy is often called the 'plethory.'

Ib.

> *Queen.* Your sister's drown'd, Laertes.
> *Laer.* Drown'd! O, where?

That Laertes might be excused in some degree for not cooling, the Act concludes with the affecting death of Ophelia,—who in the beginning lay like a little projection of land into a lake or stream, covered with spray-flowers, quietly reflected in the quiet waters, but at length is undermined or loosened, and becomes a faery isle, and after a brief vagrancy sinks almost without an eddy!

Act v. sc. 1. O, the rich contrast between the Clowns and Hamlet, as two extremes! You see in the former the mockery of logic, and a traditional wit valued, like truth, for its antiquity, and treasured up, like a tune, for use.

Ib. sc. 1 and 2. Shakspeare seems to mean all Hamlet's character to be brought together before his final disappearance from the scene;—his meditative excess in the

grave-digging, his yielding to passion with Laertes, his love for Ophelia blazing out, his tendency to generalize on all occasions in the dialogue with Horatio, his fine gentlemanly manners with Osrick, and his and Shakspeare's own fondness for presentiment:

But thou would'st not think, how ill all's here about my heart: but it is no matter.

NOTES ON MACBETH.

MACBETH stands in contrast throughout with Hamlet; in the manner of opening more especially: In the latter, there is a gradual ascent from the simplest forms of conversation to the language of impassioned intellect,—yet the intellect still remaining the seat of passion: in the former, the invocation is at once made to the imagination and the emotions connected therewith. Hence the movement throughout is the most rapid of all Shakspeare's plays; and hence also, with the exception of the disgusting passage of the Porter (Act ii. sc. 3), which I dare pledge myself to demonstrate to be an interpolation of the actors, there is not, to the best of my remembrance, a single pun or play on words in the whole drama. I have previously given an answer to the thousand times repeated charge against Shakspeare upon the subject of his punning, and I here merely mention the fact of the absence of any puns in Macbeth, as justifying a candid doubt at least, whether even in these figures of speech and fanciful modifications of language, Shakspeare may not have followed rules and principles that merit and would stand the test of philosophic examination. And hence, also, there is an entire absence of comedy, nay, even of irony and philosophic contemplation in Macbeth,—the play being wholly and purely tragic. For the same cause, there are no reasonings of equivocal morality, which would have required a more leisurely state and a consequently greater activity of mind;—no sophistry of self-delusion,—except only that previously to the dreadful act, Macbeth mistranslates the recoilings and ominous whispers of conscience into prudential and selfish reasonings, and, after the deed done, the terrors of remorse into fear from external dangers,—

like delirious men who run away from the phantoms of their own brains, or, raised by terror to rage, stab the real object that is within their reach :—whilst Lady Macbeth merely endeavours to reconcile his and her own sinkings of heart by anticipations of the worst, and an affected bravado in confronting them. In all the rest, Macbeth's language is the grave utterance of the very heart, conscience-sick, even to the last faintings of moral death. It is the same in all the other characters. The variety arises from rage, caused ever and anon by disruption of anxious thought, and the quick transition of fear into it.

In Hamlet and Macbeth the scene opens with superstition ; but, in each it is not merely different, but opposite. In the first it is connected with the best and holiest feelings ; in the second with the shadowy, turbulent, and unsanctified cravings of the individual will. Nor is the purpose the same ; in the one the object is to excite, whilst in the other it is to mark a mind already excited. Superstition, of one sort or another, is natural to victorious generals ; the instances are too notorious to need mentioning. There is so much of chance in warfare, and such vast events are connected with the acts of a single individual,—the representative, in truth, of the efforts of myriads, and yet to the public and, doubtless, to his own feelings, the aggregate of all,—that the proper temperament for generating or receiving superstitious impressions is naturally produced. Hope, the master element of a commanding genius, meeting with an active and combining intellect, and an imagination of just that degree of vividness which disquiets and impels the soul to try to realize its images, greatly increases the creative power of the mind ; and hence the images become a satisfying world of themselves, as is the case in every poet and original philosopher :—but hope fully gratified, and yet, the elementary basis of the passion remaining, becomes fear ; and, indeed, the general, who must often feel, even though he may hide it from his own consciousness, how large a share chance had in his successes, may very naturally be irresolute in a new scene, where he knows that all will depend on his own act and election.

The Weird Sisters are as true a creation of Shakspeare's, as his Ariel and Caliban,—fates, furies, and materializing witches being the elements. They are wholly different

from any representation of witches in the contemporary writers, and yet presented a sufficient external resemblance to the creatures of vulgar prejudice to act immediately on the audience. Their character consists in the imaginative disconnected from the good; they are the shadowy obscure and fearfully anomalous of physical nature, the lawless of human nature,—elemental avengers without sex or kin:

> Fair is foul, and foul is fair;
> Hover thro' the fog and filthy air.

How much it were to be wished in playing Macbeth, that an attempt should be made to introduce the flexile character-mask of the ancient pantomime;—that Flaxman would contribute his genius to the embodying and making sensuously perceptible that of Shakspeare!

The style and rhythm of the Captain's speeches in the second scene should be illustrated by reference to the interlude in Hamlet, in which the epic is substituted for the tragic, in order to make the latter be felt as the real-life diction. In Macbeth, the poet's object was to raise the mind at once to the high tragic tone, that the audience might be ready for the precipitate consummation of guilt in the early part of the play. The true reason for the first appearance of the Witches is to strike the key-note of the character of the whole drama, as is proved by their reappearance in the third scene, after such an order of the king's as establishes their supernatural power of information. I say information,—for so it only is as to Glamis and Cawdor; the 'king hereafter' was still contingent,—still in Macbeth's moral will; although, if he should yield to the temptation, and thus forfeit his free agency, the link of cause and effect *more physico* would then commence. I need not say, that the general idea is all that can be required from the poet,—not a scholastic logical consistency in all the parts so as to meet metaphysical objectors. But O! how truly Shakspearian is the opening of Macbeth's character given in the *unpossessedness* of Banquo's mind, wholly present to the present object,—an unsullied, unscarified mirror!—And how strictly...true to nature it is, that Banquo, and not Macbeth himself, directs our notice to the effect produced on Macbeth's mind, rendered temptible by previous dalliance of the fancy with ambitious thoughts:

Good Sir, why do you start; and seem to fear
Things that do sound so fair?

And then, again, still unintroitive, addresses the Witches:—

I' the name of truth,
Are ye fantastical, or that indeed
Which outwardly ye show?

Banquo's questions are those of natural curiosity,—such as a girl would put after hearing a gipsy tell her schoolfellow's fortune;—all perfectly general, or rather planless. But Macbeth, lost in thought, raises himself to speech only by the Witches being about to depart:—

Stay, you imperfect speakers, tell me more:—

and all that follows is reasoning on a problem already discussed in his mind,—on a hope which he welcomes, and the doubts concerning the attainment of which he wishes to have cleared up. Compare his eagerness,—the keen eye with which he has pursued the Witches' evanishing—

Speak, I charge you!

with the easily satisfied mind of the self-uninterested Banquo:—

The earth hath bubbles, as the water has,
And these are of them:—Whither are they vanished?

and then Macbeth's earnest reply,—

Into the air; and what seem'd corporal, melted
As breath into the wind.—*'Would they had staid!*

Is it too minute to notice the appropriateness of the simile 'as breath,' &c., in a cold climate?

Still again Banquo goes on wondering like any common spectator:

Were such things here as we do speak about?

whilst Macbeth persists in recurring to the self-concerning:—

Your children shall be kings.
Ban. You shall be king.
Macb. And thane of Cawdor too: went it not so?

So surely is the guilt in its germ anterior to the supposed cause, and immediate temptation! Before he can cool,

the confirmation of the tempting half of the prophecy arrives, and the concatenating tendency of the imagination is fostered by the sudden coincidence :—

> Glamis, and thane of Cawdor:
> The greatest is behind.

Oppose this to Banquo's simple surprise :—

> What, can the devil speak true?

Ib. Banquo's speech :—

> That, trusted home,
> Might yet enkindle you unto the crown,
> Besides the thane of Cawdor.

I doubt whether 'enkindle' has not another sense than that of 'stimulating;' I mean of 'kind' and 'kin,' as when rabbits are said to 'kindle.' However Macbeth no longer hears any thing *ab extra* :—

> Two truths are told,
> As happy prologues to the swelling act
> Of the imperial theme.

Then in the necessity of recollecting himself—

> I thank you, gentlemen.

Then he relapses into himself again, and every word of his soliloquy shows the early birth-date of his guilt. He is all-powerful without strength; he wishes the end, but is irresolute as to the means; conscience distinctly warns him, and he lulls it imperfectly :—

> If chance will have me king, why, chance may crown me
> Without my stir.

Lost in the prospective of his guilt, he turns round alarmed lest others may suspect what is passing in his own mind, and instantly vents the lie of ambition :

> My dull brain was wrought
> With things *forgotten*;—

And immediately after pours forth the promising courtesies of a usurper in intention :—

> Kind gentlemen, your pains
> Are register'd where every day I turn
> The leaf to read them.

Ib. Macbeth's speech :

> Present *fears*
> Are less than horrible imaginings.

Warburton's note, and substitution of 'feats' for 'fears.'

Mercy on this most wilful ingenuity of blundering, which, nevertheless, was the very Warburton of Warburton —his inmost being! 'Fears,' here, are present fear-striking objects, *terribilia adstantia*.

Ib. sc. 4. O! the affecting beauty of the death of Cawdor, and the presentimental speech of the king :

> There's no art
> To find the mind's construction in the face :
> He was a gentleman on whom I built
> An absolute trust—

Interrupted by—

> O worthiest cousin !

on the entrance of the deeper traitor for whom Cawdor had made way! And here in contrast with Duncan's 'plenteous joys,' Macbeth has nothing but the commonplaces of loyalty, in which he hides himself with 'our duties.' Note the exceeding effort of Macbeth's addresses to the king, his reasoning on his allegiance, and then especially when a new difficulty, the designation of a successor, suggests a new crime. This, however, seems the first distinct notion, as to the plan of realizing his wishes; and here, therefore, with great propriety, Macbeth's cowardice of his own conscience discloses itself. I always think there is something especially Shakspearian in Duncan's speeches throughout this scene, such pourings forth, such abandonments, compared with the language of vulgar dramatists, whose characters seem to have made their speeches as the actors learn them.

Ib. Duncan's speech :—

> Sons, kinsmen, thanes,
> And you whose places are the nearest, know,
> We will establish our estate upon
> Our eldest Malcolm, whom we name hereafter
> The Prince of Cumberland : which honour must
> Not unaccompanied, invest him only ;
> But signs of nobleness, like stars, shall shine
> On all deservers.

It is a fancy ;—but I can never read this and the follow-

ing speeches of Macbeth, without involuntarily thinking of the Miltonic Messiah and Satan.

Ib. sc. 5. Macbeth is described by Lady Macbeth so as at the same time to reveal her own character. Could he have every thing he wanted, he would rather have it innocently ;—ignorant, as alas ! how many of us are, that he who wishes a temporal end for itself, does in truth will the means ; and hence the danger of indulging fancies. Lady Macbeth, like all in Shakspeare, is a class individualized :—of high rank, left much alone, and feeding herself with day-dreams of ambition, she mistakes the courage of fantasy for the power of bearing the consequences of the realities of guilt. Hers is the mock fortitude of a mind deluded by ambition ; she shames her husband with a superhuman audacity of fancy which she cannot support, but sinks in the season of remorse, and dies in suicidal agony. Her speech :

> Come, all you spirits
> That tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here, &c.

is that of one who had habitually familiarized her imagination to dreadful conceptions, and was trying to do so still more. Her invocations and requisitions are all the false efforts of a mind accustomed only hitherto to the shadows of the imagination, vivid enough to throw the every-day substances of life into shadow, but never as yet brought into direct contact with their own correspondent realities. She evinces no womanly life, no wifely joy, at the return of her husband, no pleased terror at the thought of his past dangers, whilst Macbeth bursts forth naturally—

> My dearest love—

and shrinks from the boldness with which she presents his own thoughts to him. With consummate art she at first uses as incentives the very circumstances, Duncan's coming to their house, &c. which Macbeth's conscience would most probably have adduced to her as motives of abhorrence or repulsion. Yet Macbeth is not prepared :

> We will speak further.

Ib. sc. 6. The lyrical movement with which this scene opens, and the free and unengaged mind of Banquo, loving nature, and rewarded in the love itself, form a highly

dramatic contrast with the laboured rhythm and hypocritical over-much of Lady Macbeth's welcome, in which you cannot detect a ray of personal feeling, but all is thrown upon the 'dignities,' the general duty.

Ib. sc. 7. Macbeth's speech:

> We will proceed no further in this business:
> He hath honor'd me of late; and I have bought
> Golden opinions from all sorts of people,
> Which would be worn now in their newest gloss,
> Not cast aside so soon.

Note the inward pangs and warnings of conscience interpreted into prudential reasonings.

Act ii. sc. 1. Banquo's speech:

> A heavy summons lies like lead upon me,
> And yet I would not sleep. Merciful powers!
> Restrain in me the cursed thoughts, that nature
> Gives way to in repose.

The disturbance of an innocent soul by painful suspicions of another's guilty intentions and wishes, and fear of the cursed thoughts of sensual nature.

Ib. sc. 2. Now that the deed is done or doing—now that the first reality commences, Lady Macbeth shrinks. The most simple sound strikes terror, the most natural consequences are horrible, whilst previously every thing, however awful, appeared a mere trifle; conscience, which before had been hidden to Macbeth in selfish and prudential fears, now rushes in upon him in her own veritable person:

> Methought I heard a voice cry—Sleep no more!
> I could not say Amen,
> When they did say, God bless us!

And see the novelty given to the most familiar images by a new state of feeling.

Ib. sc. 3. This low soliloquy of the Porter and his few speeches afterwards, I believe to have been written for the mob by some other hand, perhaps with Shakspeare's consent; and that finding it take, he with the remaining ink of a pen otherwise employed, just interpolated the words—

> I'll devil-porter it no further: I had thought to have let in some of all professions, that go the primrose way to th' everlasting bonfire.

Of the rest not one syllable has the ever-present being of Shakspeare.

Act iii. sc. 1. Compare Macbeth's mode of working on the murderers in this place with Schiller's mistaken scene between Butler, Devereux, and Macdonald in Wallenstein. (Part II. act iv. sc. 2.) The comic was wholly out of season. Shakspeare never introduces it, but when it may react on the tragedy by harmonious contrast.

Ib. sc. 2. Macbeth's speech :

> But let the frame of things disjoint, both the worlds suffer,
> Ere we will eat our meal in fear, and sleep
> In the affliction of these terrible dreams
> That shake us nightly.

Ever and ever mistaking the anguish of conscience for fears of selfishness, and thus as a punishment of that selfishness, plunging still deeper in guilt and ruin.

Ib. Macbeth's speech :

> Be innocent of the knowledge, dearest chuck,
> Till thou applaud the deed.

This is Macbeth's sympathy with his own feelings, and his mistaking his wife's opposite state.

Ib. sc. 4.

> *Macb.* It will have blood, they say ; blood will have blood :
> Stones have been known to move, and trees to speak ;
> Augurs, and understood relations, have
> By magot-pies, and choughs, and rooks, brought forth
> The secret'st man of blood.

The deed is done ; but Macbeth receives no comfort, no additional security. He has by guilt torn himself live-asunder from nature, and is, therefore, himself in a preternatural state : no wonder, then, that he is inclined to superstition, and faith in the unknown of signs and tokens, and super-human agencies.

Act iv. sc. 1.

> *Len.* 'Tis two or three, my lord, that bring you word,
> Macduff is fled to England.
> *Macb.* Fled to England ?

The acme of the avenging conscience.

Ib. sc. 2. This scene, dreadful as it is, is still a relief, because a variety, because domestic, and therefore soothing, as associated with the only real pleasures of life. The

conversation between Lady Macduff and her child heightens the pathos, and is preparatory for the deep tragedy of their assassination. Shakspeare's fondness for children is every where shown;—in Prince Arthur, in King John; in the sweet scene in the Winter's Tale between Hermione and her son; nay, even in honest Evans's examination of Mrs. Page's schoolboy. To the objection that Shakspeare wounds the moral sense by the unsubdued, undisguised description of the most hateful atrocity—that he tears the feelings without mercy, and even outrages the eye itself with scenes of insupportable horror—I, omitting Titus Andronicus, as not genuine, and excepting the scene of Gloster's blinding in Lear, answer boldly in the name of Shakspeare, not guilty.

Ib. sc. 3. Malcolm's speech:

> Better Macbeth,
> Than such a one to reign.

The moral is—the dreadful effects even on the best minds of the soul-sickening sense of insecurity.

Ib. How admirably Macduff's grief is in harmony with the whole play! It rends, not dissolves, the heart. 'The tune of it goes manly.' Thus is Shakspeare always master of himself and of his subject,—a genuine Proteus:—we see all things in him, as images in a calm lake, most distinct, most accurate,—only more splendid, more glorified. This is correctness in the only philosophical sense. But he requires your sympathy and your submission; you must have that recipiency of moral impression without which the purposes and ends of the drama would be frustrated, and the absence of which demonstrates an utter want of all imagination, a deadness to that necessary pleasure of being innocently—shall I say, deluded?—or rather, drawn away from ourselves to the music of noblest thought in harmonious sounds. Happy he, who not only in the public theatre, but in the labours of a profession, and round the light of his own hearth, still carries a heart so pleasure-fraught!

Alas for Macbeth! now all is inward with him; he has no more prudential prospective reasonings. His wife, the only being who could have had any seat in his affections, dies; he puts on despondency, the final heart-armour of the wretched, and would fain think every thing shadowy

and unsubstantial, as indeed all things are to those who cannot regard them as symbols of goodness :—

> Out out, brief candle !
> Life's but a walking shadow ; a poor player,
> That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,
> And then is heard no more ; it is a tale
> Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
> Signifying nothing.

NOTES ON THE WINTER'S TALE.

ALTHOUGH, on the whole, this play is exquisitely respondent to its title, and even in the fault I am about to mention, still a winter's tale ; yet it seems a mere indolence of the great bard not to have provided in the oracular response (Act ii. sc. 2) some ground for Hermione's seeming death and fifteen years voluntary concealment. This might have been easily effected by some obscure sentence of the oracle, as for example :—

> 'Nor shall he ever recover an heir, if he have a wife before that recovery.'

The idea of this delightful drama is a genuine jealousy of disposition, and it should be immediately followed by the perusal of Othello, which is the direct contrast of it in every particular. For jealousy is a vice of the mind, a culpable tendency of the temper, having certain well known and well defined effects and concomitants, all of which are visible in Leontes, and, I boldly say, not one of which marks its presence in Othello ;—such as, first, an excitability by the most inadequate causes, and an eagerness to snatch at proofs ; secondly, a grossness of conception, and a disposition to degrade the object of the passion by sensual fancies and images ; thirdly, a sense of shame of his own feelings exhibited in a solitary moodiness of humour, and yet from the violence of the passion forced to utter itself, and therefore catching occasions to ease the mind by ambiguities, equivoques, by talking to those that cannot, and who are known not to be able to, understand what is said to them,—in short, by soliloquy in the form of dialogue, and hence a confused, broken, and fragmentary, manner ; fourthly, a dread of vulgar ridicule,

as distinct from a high sense of honour, or a mistaken sense of duty; and lastly, and immediately, consequent on this, a spirit of selfish vindictiveness.

Act i. sc. 1—2.

Observe the easy style of chitchat between Camillo and Archidamus as contrasted with the elevated diction on the introduction of the kings and Hermione in the second scene: and how admirably Polixenes' obstinate refusal to Leontes to stay—

> There is no tongue that moves; none, none i' the world
> So soon as yours, could win me;—

prepares for the effect produced by his afterwards yielding to Hermione;—which is, nevertheless, perfectly natural from mere courtesy of sex, and the exhaustion of the will by former efforts of denial, and well calculated to set in nascent action the jealousy of Leontes. This, when once excited, is unconsciously increased by Hermione:—

> Yet, good deed, Leontes,
> I love thee not a jar o' the clock behind
> What lady she her lord;—

accompanied, as a good actress ought to represent it, by an expression and recoil of apprehension that she had gone too far.

> At my request, he would not:—

The first working of the jealous fit;—

> Too hot, too hot:—

The morbid tendency of Leontes to lay hold of the merest trifles, and his grossness immediately afterwards—

> Paddling palms and pinching fingers;—

followed by his strange loss of self-control in his dialogue with the little boy.

Act iii. sc. 2. Paulina's speech:

> That thou betray'dst Polixenes, 'twas nothing;
> That did but show thee, of a *fool*, inconstant,
> And damnable ingrateful.—

Theobald reads 'soul.'

I think the original word is Shakspeare's. 1. My ear feels it to be Shakspearian; 2. The involved grammar is

Shakspearian ;—'show thee, being a fool naturally, to have improved thy folly by inconstancy ; ' 3. The alteration is most flat, and un-Shakspearian. As to the grossness of the abuse—she calls him 'gross and foolish' a few lines below.

Act iv. sc. 2. Speech of Autolycus :—

> For the life to come, I sleep out the thought of it.

Fine as this is, and delicately characteristic of one who had lived and been reared in the best society, and had been precipitated from it by dice and drabbing ; yet still it strikes against my feelings as a note out of tune, and as not coalescing with that pastoral tint which gives such a charm to this act. It is too Macbeth-like in the 'snapper up of unconsidered trifles.'

Ib. sc. 3. Perdita's speech :—

> From Dis's waggon ! daffodils.

An epithet is wanted here, not merely or chiefly for the metre, but for the balance, for the æsthetic logic. Perhaps, 'golden' was the word which would set off the 'violets dim.'

Ib.

> Pale primroses
> That die unmarried.—

Milton's—

> And the rathe primrose that forsaken dies.

Ib. Perdita's speech :—

> Even here undone :
> I was not much afear'd ; for once or twice
> I was about to speak, and tell him plainly,
> The self-same sun, that shines upon his court,
> Hides not his visage from our cottage, but
> Looks on alike. Wilt please you, Sir, be gone !
> (*To Florizel.*)
> I told you, what would come of this. Beseech you,
> Of your own state take care : this dream of mine,
> Being now awake, I'll queen it no inch farther,
> But milk my ewes, and weep.

O how more than exquisite is this whole speech !—And that profound nature of noble pride and grief venting themselves in a momentary peevishness of resentment towards Florizel :—

> ——Wilt please you, Sir, be gone !

Ib. Speech of Autolycus :—

Let me have no lying ; it becomes none but tradesmen, and they often give us soldiers the lie ; but we pay them for it in stamped coin, not stabbing steel ;—therefore they do not *give* us the lie.

As we *pay* them, they, therefore, do not *give* it us.

NOTES ON OTHELLO.

Act i. sc. 1.

ADMIRABLE is the preparation, so truly and peculiarly Shakspearian, in the introduction of Roderigo, as the dupe on whom Iago shall first exercise his art, and in so doing display his own character. Roderigo, without any fixed principle, but not without the moral notions and sympathies with honour, which his rank and connections had hung upon him, is already well fitted and predisposed for the purpose ; for very want of character and strength of passion, like wind loudest in an empty house, constitute his character. The first three lines happily state the nature and foundation of the friendship between him and Iago,—the purse,—as also the contrast of Roderigo's intemperance of mind with Iago's coolness,—the coolness of a preconceiving experimenter. The mere language of protestation—

If ever I did dream of such a matter, abhor me,—

which falling in with the associative link, determines Roderigo's continuation of complaint—

Thou told'st me, thou didst hold him in thy hate—

elicits at length a true feeling of Iago's mind, the dread of contempt habitual to those, who encourage in themselves, and have their keenest pleasure in, the expression of contempt for others. Observe Iago's high self-opinion, and the moral, that a wicked man will employ real feelings, as well as assume those most alien from his own, as instruments of his purposes :—

——And, by the faith of man,
I know my price, I am worth no worse a place.

I think Tyrwhitt's reading of 'life' for 'wife'—

A fellow almost damn'd in a fair *wife*—

the true one, as fitting to Iago's contempt for whatever did not display power, and that intellectual power. In what follows, let the reader feel how by and through the glass of two passions, disappointed vanity and envy, the very vices of which he is complaining, are made to act upon him as if they were so many excellences, and the more appropriately, because cunning is always admired and wished for by minds conscious of inward weakness ;—but they act only by half, like music on an inattentive auditor, swelling the thoughts which prevent him from listening to it.

Ib.

> *Rod.* What a full fortune does the *thick-lips* owe,
> If he can carry 't thus.

Roderigo turns off to Othello ; and here comes one, if not the only, seeming justification of our blackamoor or negro Othello. Even if we supposed this an uninterrupted tradition of the theatre, and that Shakspeare himself, from want of scenes, and the experience that nothing could be made too marked for the senses of his audience, had practically sanctioned it,—would this prove aught concerning his own intention as a poet for all ages ? Can we imagine him so utterly ignorant as to make a barbarous negro plead royal birth,—at a time, too, when negroes were not known except as slaves ?—As for Iago's language to Brabantio, it implies merely that Othello was a Moor, that is, black. Though I think the rivalry of Roderigo sufficient to account for his wilful confusion of Moor and Negro,—yet, even if compelled to give this up, I should think it only adapted for the acting of the day, and should complain of an enormity built on a single word, in direct contradiction to Iago's 'Barbary horse.' Besides, if we could in good earnest believe Shakspeare ignorant of the distinction, still why should we adopt one disagreeable possibility instead of a ten times greater and more pleasing probability ? It is a common error to mistake the epithets applied by the *dramatis personæ* to each other, as truly descriptive of what the audience ought to see or know. No doubt Desdemona saw Othello's visage in his mind ; yet, as we are constituted, and most surely as an English audience was disposed in the beginning of the seventeenth century, it would be something monstrous to conceive this beautiful Venetian girl falling in love with a veritable negro.

It would argue a disproportionateness, a want of balance, in Desdemona, which Shakspeare does not appear to have in the least contemplated.

Ib. Brabantio's speech :—

> This accident is not unlike my dream :—

The old careful senator, being caught careless, transfers his caution to his dreaming power at least.

Ib. Iago's speech :—

> —For their souls,
> Another of his fathom they have not,
> To lead their business :—

The forced praise of Othello followed by the bitter hatred of him in this speech! And observe how Brabantio's dream prepares for his recurrence to the notion of philtres, and how both prepare for carrying on the plot of the arraignment of Othello on this ground.

Ib. sc. 2.

> *Oth.* 'Tis better as it is.

How well these few words impress at the outset the truth of Othello's own character of himself at the end—'that he was not easily wrought!' His self-government contradistinguishes him throughout from Leontes.

Ib. Othello's speech :—

> —And my demerits
> May speak, *unbonnetted*—

The argument in Theobald's note, where 'and bonnetted' is suggested, goes on the assumption that Shakspeare could not use the same word differently in different places; whereas I should conclude, that as in the passage in Lear the word is employed in its direct meaning, so here it is used metaphorically; and this is confirmed by what has escaped the editors, that it is not 'I,' but 'my demerits' that may speak unbonnetted,—without the symbol of a petitioning inferior.

Ib. Othello's speech :—

> So please your grace, my ancient;
> A man he is of honesty and trust:
> To his conveyance I assign my wife.

Compare this with the behaviour of Leontes to his true friend Camillo.

Ib. sc. 3.

Bra. Look to her, Moor; have a quick eye to see;
She has deceiv'd her father, and may thee.
Oth. My life upon her faith.

In real life, how do we look back to little speeches as presentimental of, or contrasted with, an affecting event! Even so, Shakspeare, as secure of being read over and over, of becoming a family friend, provides this passage for his readers, and leaves it to them.

Ib. Iago's speech:—

Virtue? a fig! 'tis in ourselves, that we are thus, or thus, &c.

This speech comprises the passionless character of Iago. It is all will in intellect; and therefore he is here a bold partizan of a truth, but yet of a truth converted into a falsehood by the absence of all the necessary modifications caused by the frail nature of man. And then comes the last sentiment,—

Our raging motions, our carnal stings, our unbitted lusts, whereof I take this, that you call—love, to be a sect or scion!

Here is the true Iagoism of, alas! how many! Note Iago's pride of mastery in the repetition of 'Go, make money!' to his anticipated dupe, even stronger than his love of lucre: and when Roderigo is completely won—

I am chang'd. I'll go sell all my land—

when the effect has been fully produced, the repetition of triumph—

Go to; farewell; put money enough in your purse!

The remainder—Iago's soliloquy—the motive-hunting of a motiveless malignity—how awful it is! Yea, whilst he is still allowed to bear the divine image, it is too fiendish for his own steady view,—for the lonely gaze of a being next to devil, and only not quite devil,—and yet a character which Shakspeare has attempted and executed, without disgust and without scandal!

Dr. Johnson has remarked that little or nothing is wanting to render the Othello a regular tragedy, but to have opened the play with the arrival of Othello in Cyprus, and to have thrown the preceding act into the form of narration. Here then is the place to determine, whether such a change

would or would not be an improvement;—nay, (to throw down the glove with a full challenge) whether the tragedy would or not by such an arrangement become more regular,—that is, more consonant with the rules dictated by universal reason, on the true common-sense of mankind, in its application to the particular case. For in all acts of judgment, it can never be too often recollected, and scarcely too often repeated, that rules are means to ends, and, consequently, that the end must be determined and understood before it can be known what the rules are or ought to be. Now, from a certain species of drama, proposing to itself the accomplishment of certain ends,—these partly arising from the idea of the species itself, but in part, likewise, forced upon the dramatist by accidental circumstances beyond his power to remove or control,—three rules have been abstracted;—in other words, the means most conducive to the attainment of the proposed ends have been generalized, and prescribed under the names of the three unities,—the unity of time, the unity of place, and the unity of action,—which last would, perhaps, have been as appropriately, as well as more intelligibly, entitled the unity of interest. With this last the present question has no immediate concern: in fact, its conjunction with the former two is a mere delusion of words. It is not properly a rule, but in itself the great end not only of the drama, but of the epic poem, the lyric ode, of all poetry, down to the candle-flame cone of an epigram,—nay of poesy in general, as the proper generic term inclusive of all the fine arts as its species. But of the unities of time and place, which alone are entitled to the name of rules, the history of their origin will be their best criterion. You might take the Greek chorus to a place, but you could not bring a place to them without as palpable an equivoque as bringing Birnam wood to Macbeth at Dunsinane. It was the same, though in a less degree, with regard to the unity of time:—the positive fact, not for a moment removed from the senses, the presence, I mean, of the same identical chorus, was a continued measure of time;—and although the imagination may supersede perception, yet it must be granted to be an imperfection—however easily tolerated—to place the two in broad contradiction to each other. In truth, it is a mere accident of terms; for the Trilogy of the Greek

theatre was a drama in three acts, and notwithstanding this, what strange contrivances as to place there are in the Aristophanic Frogs. Besides, if the law of mere actual perception is once violated—as it repeatedly is even in the Greek tragedies—why is it more difficult to imagine three hours to be three years than to be a whole day and night?

Act ii. sc. 1.

Observe in how many ways Othello is made, first, our acquaintance, then our friend, then the object of our anxiety, before the deeper interest is to be approached!

Ib.

> *Mont.* But, good lieutenant, is your general wiv'd?
> *Cas.* Most fortunately: he hath achiev'd a maid
> That paragons description, and wild fame;
> One that excels the quirks of blazoning pens,
> And, in the essential vesture of creation,
> Does bear all excellency.

Here is Cassio's warm-hearted, yet perfectly disengaged, praise of Desdemona, and sympathy with the 'most fortunately' wived Othello;—and yet Cassio is an enthusiastic admirer, almost a worshipper, of Desdemona. O, that detestable code that excellence cannot be loved in any form that is female, but it must needs be selfish! Observe Othello's 'honest,' and Cassio's 'bold' Iago, and Cassio's full guileless-hearted wishes for the safety and love raptures of Othello and 'the divine Desdemona.' And also note the exquisite circumstance of Cassio's kissing Iago's wife, as if it ought to be impossible that the dullest auditor should not feel Cassio's religious love of Desdemona's purity. Iago's answers are the sneers which a proud bad intellect feels towards women, and expresses to a wife. Surely it ought to be considered a very exalted compliment to women, that all the sarcasms on them in Shakspeare are put in the mouths of villains.

Ib.

> *Des.* I am not merry; but I do beguile, &c.

The struggle of courtesy in Desdemona to abstract her attention.

Ib.

> (*Iago aside*). He takes her by the palm: Ay, well said, whisper; with as little a web as this, will I ensnare as great a fly as Cassio. Ay, smile upon her, do, &c.

The importance given to trifles, and made fertile by the villany of the observer.

Ib. Iago's dialogue with Roderigo:

This is the rehearsal on the dupe of the traitor's intentions on Othello.

Ib. Iago's soliloquy:

> But partly led to diet my revenge,
> For that I do suspect the lusty Moor
> Hath leap'd into my seat.

This thought, originally by Iago's own confession a mere suspicion, is now ripening, and gnaws his base nature as his own 'poisonous mineral' is about to gnaw the noble heart of his general.

Ib. sc. 3. Othello's speech:

> I know, Iago,
> Thy honesty and love doth mince this matter,
> Making it light to Cassio.

Honesty and love! Ay, and who but the reader of the play could think otherwise?

Ib Iago's soliloquy:

> And what's he then that says—I play the villain?
> When this advice is free I give, and honest,
> Probal to thinking, and, indeed, the course
> To win the Moor again.

He is not, you see, an absolute fiend; or, at least, he wishes to think himself not so.

Act iii. sc. 3.

> *Des.* Before Æmilia here,
> I give the warrant of thy place.

The over-zeal of innocence in Desdemona.

Ib.

> *Enter Desdemona and Æmilia.*
>
> *Oth.* If she be false, O, then, heaven mocks itself!
> I'll not believe it.

Divine! The effect of innocence and the better genius!

Act iv. sc. 3.

Æmil. Why, the wrong is but a wrong i' the world; and having the world for your labour, 'tis a wrong in your own world, and you might quickly make it right.

Warburton's note.

What any other man, who had learning enough, might

have quoted as a playful and witty illustration of his remarks against the Calvinistic *thesis*, Warburton gravely attributes to Shakspeare as intentional; and this, too, in the mouth of a lady's woman!

Act v. last scene. Othello's speech:—

> ——Of one, whose hand,
> Like the base *Indian*, threw a pearl away
> Richer than all his tribe, &c.

Theobald's note from Warburton.

Thus it is for no-poets to comment on the greatest of poets! To make Othello say that he, who had killed his wife, was like Herod who killed Mariamne!—O, how many beauties, in this one line, were impenetrable to the ever thought-swarming, but idealess, Warburton! Othello wishes to excuse himself on the score of ignorance, and yet not to excuse himself,—to excuse himself by accusing. This struggle of feeling is finely conveyed in the word 'base,' which is applied to the rude Indian, not in his own character, but as the momentary representative of Othello's 'Indian'—for I retain the old reading—means American, a savage *in genere*.

Finally, let me repeat that Othello does not kill Desdemona in jealousy, but in a conviction forced upon him by the almost superhuman art of Iago, such a conviction as any man would and must have entertained who had believed Iago's honesty as Othello did. We, the audience, know that Iago is a villain from the beginning; but in considering the essence of the Shakspearian Othello, we must perseveringly place ourselves in his situation, and under his circumstances. Then we shall immediately feel the fundamental difference between the solemn agony of the noble Moor, and the wretched fishing jealousies of Leontes, and the morbid suspiciousness of Leonatus, who is, in other respects, a fine character. Othello had no life but in Desdemona:—the belief that she, his angel, had fallen from the heaven of her native innocence, wrought a civil war in his heart. She is his counterpart; and, like him, is almost sanctified in our eyes by her absolute unsuspiciousness, and holy entireness of love. As the curtain drops, which do we pity the most?

Extremum hunc ————. There are three powers:—

Wit, which discovers partial likeness hidden in general diversity; subtlety, which discovers the diversity concealed in general apparent sameness;—and profundity, which discovers an essential unity under all the semblances of difference.

Give to a subtle man fancy, and he is a wit; to a deep man imagination, and he is a philosopher. Add, again, pleasurable sensibility in the threefold form of sympathy with the interesting in morals, the impressive in form, and the harmonious in sound,—and you have the poet.

But combine all,—wit, subtlety, and fancy, with profundity, imagination, and moral and physical susceptibility of the pleasurable,—and let the object of action be man universal; and we shall have—O, rash prophecy! say, rather, we have—a SHAKSPEARE!

NOTES ON BEN JONSON.

IT would be amusing to collect out of our dramatists from Elizabeth to Charles I. proofs of the manners of the times. One striking symptom of general coarseness of manners, which may co-exist with great refinement of morals, as, alas! *vice versa*, is to be seen in the very frequent allusions to the olfactories with their most disgusting stimulants, and these, too, in the conversation of virtuous ladies. This would not appear so strange to one who had been on terms of familiarity with Sicilian and Italian women of rank: and bad as they may, too many of them, actually be, yet I doubt not that the extreme grossness of their language has impressed many an Englishman of the present era with far darker notions than the same language would have produced in the mind of one of Elizabeth's or James's courtiers. Those who have read Shakspeare only, complain of occasional grossness in his plays; but compare him with his contemporaries, and the inevitable conviction, is that of the exquisite purity of his imagination.

The observation I have prefixed to the Volpone is the key to the faint interest which these noble efforts of intellectual power excite, with the exception of the fragment of the Sad Shepherd; because in that piece only is there any character with whom you can morally sympathize. On the other hand, Measure for Measure is the only play

of Shakspeare's in which there are not some one or more characters, generally many, whom you follow with affectionate feeling. For I confess that Isabella, of all Shakspeare's female characters, pleases me the least; and Measure for Measure is, indeed, the only one of his genuine works, which is painful to me.

Let me not conclude this remark, however, without a thankful acknowledgment to the *manes* of Ben Jonson, that the more I study his writings, I the more admire them; and the more my study of him resembles that of an ancient classic, in the *minutiæ* of his rhythm, metre, choice of words, forms of connection, and so forth, the more numerous have the points of my admiration become. I may add, too, that both the study and the admiration cannot but be disinterested, for to expect therefrom any advantage to the present drama would be ignorance. The latter is utterly heterogeneous from the drama of the Shakspearian age, with a diverse object and contrary principle. The one was to present a model by imitation of real life, taking from real life all that in it which it ought to be, and supplying the rest;—the other is to copy what is, and as it is,—at best a tolerable, but most frequently a blundering, copy. In the former the difference was an essential element; in the latter an involuntary defect. We should think it strange, if a tale in dance were announced, and the actors did not dance at all;—and yet such is modern comedy.

WHALLEY'S PREFACE.

But Jonson was soon sensible, how inconsistent this medley of names and manners was in reason and nature; and with how little propriety it could ever have a place in a legitimate and just picture of real life.

But did Jonson reflect that the very essence of a play, the very language in which it is written, is a fiction to which all the parts must conform? Surely, Greek manners in English should be a still grosser improbability than a Greek name transferred to English manners. Ben's *personæ* are too often not characters, but derangements;—the hopeless patients of a mad-doctor rather,—exhibitions of folly betraying itself in spite of existing reason and

prudence. He not poetically, but painfully exaggerates every trait; that is, not by the drollery of the circumstance, but by the excess of the originating feeling.

But to this we might reply, that far from being thought to build his characters upon abstract ideas, he was really accused of representing particular persons then existing; and that even those characters which appear to be the most exaggerated, are said to have had their respective archetypes in nature and life.

This degrades Jonson into a libeller, instead of justifying him as a dramatic poet. *Non quod verum est, sed quod verisimile*, is the dramatist's rule. At all events, the poet who chooses transitory manners, ought to content himself with transitory praise. If his object be reputation, he ought not to expect fame. The utmost he can look forwards to, is to be quoted by, and to enliven the writings of, an antiquarian. Pistol, Nym and *id genus omne*, do not please us as characters, but are endured as fantastic creations, foils to the native wit of Falstaff.—I say wit emphatically; for this character so often extolled as the masterpiece of humour, neither contains, nor was meant to contain, any humour at all.

WHALLEY'S LIFE OF JONSON.

It is to the honour of Jonson's judgment, that *the greatest poet of our nation* had the same opinion of Donne's genius and wit; and hath preserved part of him from perishing, by putting his thoughts and satire into modern verse.

Videlicet Pope!

He said further to Drummond, Shakspeare wanted art, and sometimes sense; for in one of his plays he brought in a number of men, saying they had suffered shipwreck in Bohemia, where is no sea near by a hundred miles.

I HAVE often thought Shakspeare justified in this seeming anachronism. In Pagan times a single name of a German kingdom might well be supposed to comprise a hundred miles more than at present. The truth is, these notes of Drummond's are more disgraceful to himself than to Jonson. It would be easy to conjecture how grossly Jonson must have been misunderstood, and what he had said in jest, as of Hippocrates, interpreted in earnest.

But this is characteristic of a Scotchman; he has no notion of a jest, unless you tell him—'This is a joke!'—and still less of that finer shade of feeling, the half-and-half, in which Englishmen naturally delight.

EVERY MAN OUT OF HIS HUMOUR.

Epilogue.

> The throat of war be stopt within her land,
> And *turtle-footed* peace dance fairie rings
> About her court.

TURTLE-FOOTED is a pretty word, a very pretty word: pray, what does it mean? Doves, I presume, are not dancers; and the other sort of turtle, land or sea, green-fat or hawksbill, would, I should suppose, succeed better in slow minuets than in the brisk rondillo. In one sense, to be sure, pigeons and ring-doves could not dance but with *éclat—a claw?*

POETASTER.

Introduction.

> Light! I salute thee, but with wounded nerves,
> Wishing thy golden splendour pitchy darkness.

THERE is no reason to suppose Satan's address to the sun in the Paradise Lost, more than a mere coincidence with these lines; but were it otherwise, it would be a fine instance, what usurious interest a great genius pays in borrowing. It would not be difficult to give a detailed psychological proof from these constant outbursts of anxious self-assertion, that Jonson was not a genius, a creative power. Subtract that one thing, and you may safely accumulate on his name all other excellences of a capacious, vigorous, agile, and richly-stored intellect.

Act i. sc. 1.

Ovid. While slaves be false, fathers hard, and bawds be wherish—

The roughness noticed by Theobald and Whalley, may be cured by a simple transposition:—

> While fathers hard, slaves false, and bawds be whorish.

Act iv. sc. 3.

Crisp. O—oblatrant—furibund—fatuate—strenuous.
O—conscious.

It would form an interesting essay, or rather series of essays, in a periodical work, were all the attempts to ridicule new phrases brought together, the proportion observed of words ridiculed which have been adopted, and are now common, such as *strenuous, conscious,* &c., and a trial made how far any grounds can be detected, so that one might determine beforehand whether a word was invented under the conditions of assimilability to our language or not. Thus much is certain, that the ridiculers were as often wrong as right; and Shakspeare himself could not prevent the naturalization of *accommodation, remuneration,* &c.; or Swift the gross abuse even of the word *idea.*

FALL OF SEJANUS.

Act i.

Arruntius. The name Tiberius,
I hope, will keep, howe'er he hath foregone
The dignity and power.
Silius. Sure, while he lives.
Arr. And dead, it comes to Drusus. Should he fail,
To the brave issue of Germanicus;
And they are three: too many (ha?) for him
To have a plot upon?
Sil. I do not know
The heart of his designs; but, sure, their face
Looks farther than the present.
Arr. By the gods,
If I could guess he had but such a thought,
My sword should cleave him down, &c.

THE anachronic mixture in this Arruntius of the Roman republican, to whom Tiberius must have appeared as much a tyrant as Sejanus with his James-and-Charles-the-First zeal for legitimacy of descent, in this passage, is amusing. Of our great names Milton was, I think, the first who could properly be called a republican. My recollections of Buchanan's works are too faint to enable me to judge whether the historian is not a fair exception.

Act ii. Speech of Sejanus :—

> **Adultery ! it is the lightest ill**
> **I will commit. A race of wicked acts**
> **Shall flow out of my anger, and o'erspread**
> **The world's wide face, which no posterity**
> **Shall e'er approve, nor yet keep silent, &c.**

The more we reflect and examine, examine and reflect, the more astonished shall we be at the immense superiority of Shakspeare over his contemporaries :—and yet what contemporaries ! — giant minds indeed ! Think of Jonson's erudition, and the force of learned authority in that age ; and yet in no genuine part of Shakspeare's works is there to be found such an absurd rant and ventriloquism as this, and too, too many other passages ferruminated by Jonson from Seneca's tragedies and the writings of the later Romans. I call it ventriloquism, because Sejanus is a puppet, out of which the poet makes his own voice appear to come.

Act v. Scene of the sacrifice to Fortune. This scene is unspeakably irrational. To believe, and yet to scoff at, a present miracle is little less than impossible. Sejanus should have been made to suspect priestcraft and a secret conspiracy against him.

VOLPONE.

This admirable, indeed, but yet more wonderful than admirable, play is from the fertility and vigour of invention, character, language, and sentiment the strongest proof, how impossible it is to keep up any pleasurable interest in a tale, in which there is no goodness of heart in any of the prominent characters. After the third act, this play becomes not a dead, but a painful, weight on the feelings. Zeluco is an instance of the same truth. Bonario and Celia should have been made in some way or other principals in the plot ; which they might have been, and the objects of interest, without having been made characters. In novels, the person, in whose fate you are most interested, is often the least marked character of the whole.

If it were possible to lessen the paramountcy of Volpone himself, a most delightful comedy might be produced, by

making Celia the ward or niece of Corvino, instead of his wife, and Bonario her lover.

EPICÆNE.

This is to my feelings the most entertaining of old Ben's comedies, and, more than any other, would admit of being brought out anew, if under the management of a judicious and stage-understanding play-wright; and an actor, who had studied Morose, might make his fortune.

Act i. sc. 1. Clerimont's speech:—

He would have hanged a pewterer's 'prentice once on a Shrove Tuesday's riot, for being o' that trade, when the rest were *quiet*.

The old copies read *quit*, i.e. discharged from working, and gone to divert themselves. Whalley's note.

It should be *quit*, no doubt; but not meaning 'discharged from working,' &c.—but quit, that is, acquitted. The pewterer was at his holiday diversion as well as the other apprentices, and they as forward in the riot as he. But he alone was punished under pretext of the riot, but in fact for his trade.

Act ii. sc. 1.

Morose. Cannot I, yet, find out a more compendious method, than by this *trunk*, to save my servants the labour of speech, and mine ears the discord of sounds?

What does 'trunk' mean here and in the 1st scene of the 1st act? Is it a large ear-trumpet?—or rather a tube, such as passes from parlour to kitchen, instead of a bell?

Whalley's note at the end.

Some critics of the last age imagined the character of Morose to be wholly out of nature. But to vindicate our poet, Mr. Dryden tells us from tradition, and we may venture to take his word, that Jonson was really acquainted with a person of this whimsical turn of mind: and as humour is a personal quality, the poet is acquitted from the charge of exhibiting a monster, or an extravagant unnatural caricatura.

If Dryden had not made all additional proof superfluous by his own plays, this very vindication would evince that he had formed a false and vulgar conception of the nature

and conditions of the drama and dramatic personation. Ben Jonson would himself have rejected such a plea:—

> For he knew, poet never credit gain'd
> By writing *truths*, but things, like truths, well feign'd.

By 'truths' he means 'facts.' Caricatures are not less so, because they are found existing in real life. Comedy demands characters, and leaves caricatures to farce. The safest and truest defence of old Ben would be to call the Epicæne the best of farces. The defect in Morose, as in other of Jonson's *dramatis personæ*, lies in this;—that the accident is not a prominence growing out of, and nourished by, the character which still circulates in it, but that the character, such as it is, rises out of, or, rather, consists in, the accident. Shakspeare's comic personages have exquisitely characteristic features; however awry, disproportionate, and laughable they may be, still, like Bardolph's nose, they are features. But Jonson's are either a man with a huge wen, having a circulation of its own, and which we might conceive amputated, and the patient thereby losing all his character; or they are mere wens themselves instead of men,—wens personified, or with eyes, nose, and mouth cut out, mandrake-fashion.

Nota bene. All the above, and much more, will have justly been said, if, and whenever, the drama of Jonson is brought into comparisons of rivalry with the Shakspearian. But this should not be. Let its inferiority to the Shakspearian be at once fairly owned,—but at the same time as the inferiority of an altogether different *genus* of the drama. On this ground, old Ben would still maintain his proud height. He, no less than Shakspeare, stands on the summit of his hill, and looks round him like a master,—though his be Lattrig and Shakspeare's Skiddaw.

THE ALCHEMIST.

Act i. sc. 2. Face's speech:—

> Will take his oath o' the Greek *Xenophon*,
> If need be, in his pocket.

ANOTHER reading is 'Testament.'

Probably, the meaning is—that intending to give false evidence, he carried a Greek Xenophon to pass it off for

a Greek Testament, and so avoid perjury—as the Irish do, by contriving to kiss their thumb-nails instead of the book.

Act ii. sc. 2. Mammon's speech :—

> I will have all my beds blown up ; not stuft :
> Down is too hard.

Thus the air-cushions, though perhaps only lately brought into use, were invented in idea in the seventeenth century !

CATILINE'S CONSPIRACY.

A FONDNESS for judging one work by comparison with others, perhaps altogether of a different class, argues a vulgar taste. Yet it is chiefly on this principle that the Catiline has been rated so low. Take it and Sejanus, as compositions of a particular kind, namely, as a mode of relating great historical events in the liveliest and most interesting manner, and I cannot help wishing that we had whole volumes of such plays. We might as rationally expect the excitement of the Vicar of Wakefield from Goldsmith's History of England, as that of Lear, Othello, &c. from the Sejanus or Catiline.

Act i. sc. 4.

> *Cat.* Sirrah, what ail you ?
> (*He spies one of his boys not answer.*)
> *Pag.* Nothing.
> *Best.* Somewhat modest.
> *Cat.* Slave, I will strike your soul out with my foot, &c.

This is either an unintelligible, or, in every sense, a most unnatural, passage,—improbable, if not impossible, at the moment of signing and swearing such a conspiracy, to the most libidinous satyr. The very presence of the boys is an outrage to probability. I suspect that these lines down to the words 'throat opens,' should be removed back so as to follow the words 'on this part of the house,' in the speech of Catiline soon after the entry of the conspirators. A total erasure, however, would be the best, or, rather, the only possible, amendment.

Act ii. sc. 2. Sempronia's speech :—

> —He is but a new fellow,
> An *inmate* here in Rome, as Catiline calls him—

A 'lodger' would have been a happier imitation of the *inquilinus* of Sallust.

Act iv. sc. 6. Speech of Cethegus :—

Can these or such be any aids to us, &c.

What a strange notion Ben must have formed of a determined, remorseless, all-daring, fool-hardiness, to have represented it in such a mouthing Tamburlane, and bombastic tonguebully as this Cethegus of his!

BARTHOLOMEW FAIR.

Induction. Scrivener's speech :—

If there be never a *servant-monster* i' the Fair, who can help it, he says, nor a nest of antiques?

THE best excuse that can be made for Jonson, and in a somewhat less degree for Beaumont and Fletcher, in respect of these base and silly sneers at Shakspeare, is, that his plays were present to men's minds chiefly as acted. They had not a neat edition of them, as we have, so as, by comparing the one with the other, to form a just notion of the mighty mind that produced the whole. At all events, and in every point of view, Jonson stands far higher in a moral light than Beaumont and Fletcher. He was a fair contemporary, and in his way, and as far as Shakspeare is concerned, an original. But Beaumont and Fletcher were always imitators of, and often borrowers from, him, and yet sneer at him with a spite far more malignant than Jonson, who, besides, has made noble compensation by his praises.

Act ii. sc. 3.

Just. I mean a child of the horn-thumb, a babe *of booty*, boy, a cut purse.

Does not this confirm, what the passage itself cannot but suggest, the propriety of substituting 'booty' for 'beauty' in Falstaff's speech, Henry IV. Pt. I. act ii. sc. 2. 'Let not us, &c.?'

It is not often that old Ben condescends to imitate a modern author; but Master Dan. Knockhum Jordan and his vapours are manifest reflexes of Nym and Pistol.

Ib. sc. 5.

Quarl. She'll make excellent geer for the coachmakers here in Smithfield, to anoint wheels and axletrees with.

Good! but yet it falls short of the speech of a Mr. Johnes, M.P., in the Common Council, on the invasion intended by Buonaparte: 'Houses plundered—then burnt; —sons conscribed—wives and daughters ravished,' &c., &c. —" But as for you, you luxurious Aldermen! with your fat will he grease the wheels of his triumphant chariot!"

Ib. sc. 6.

Coh. Avoid i' your satin doublet, Numps.

This reminds me of Shakspeare's 'Aroint thee, witch!' I find in several books of that age the words *aloigne* and *eloigne*—that is, 'keep your distance!' or 'off with you!' Perhaps 'aroint' was a corruption of 'aloigne' by the vulgar. The common etymology from *ronger* to gnaw seems unsatisfactory.

Act iii. sc. 4.

Quarl. How now, Numps! almost tired i' your protectorship? overparted, overparted?

An odd sort of propheticality in this Numps and old Noll!

Ib. sc. 6. Knockhum's speech:—

He eats with his eyes, as well as his teeth.

A good motto for the Parson in Hogarth's Election Dinner,—who shows how easily he might be reconciled to the Church of Rome, for he worships what he eats.

Act v. sc. 5.

Pup. Di. It is not prophane.
Lan. It is not prophane, he says.
Boy. It is prophane.
Pup. It is not prophane.
Boy. It is prophane.
Pup. It is not prophane.
Lan. Well said, confute him with Not, still.

An imitation of the quarrel between Bacchus and the Frogs in Aristophanes:—

Χορός.
ἀλλὰ μὴν κεκραξόμεσθά γ',
ὁπόσον ἡ φάρυγξ ἂν ἡμῶν

χανδάνῃ, δι' ἡμέρας,
βρεκεκεκὲξ, κοὰξ, κοὰξ.
Διόνυσος.
τοὐτῳ γὰρ οὐ νικήσετε.
Χορός.
οὐδὲ μὴν ἡμᾶς σὺ πάντως.
Διόνυσος.
οὐδὲ μὴν ὑμεῖς γε δή μ' οὐδέποτε.

THE DEVIL IS AN ASS.

Act i. sc. 1.

Pug. Why any: Fraud,
Or Covetousness, or lady Vanity,
Or old Iniquity, *I'll call him hither.*

The words in italics should probably be given to the master-devil, Satan. Whalley's note.

THAT is, against all probability, and with a (for Jonson) impossible violation of character. The words plainly belong to Pug, and mark at once his simpleness and his impatience.

Ib. sc. 4. Fitz-dottrel's soliloquy:—

Compare this exquisite piece of sense, satire, and sound philosophy in 1616 with Sir M. Hale's speech from the bench in a trial of a witch many years afterwards.[1]

Act ii. sc. 1. Meercraft's speech:—

Sir, money's a whore, a bawd, a drudge.—

I doubt not that 'money' was the first word of the line, and has dropped out:—

Money! Sir, money's a, &c.

THE STAPLE OF NEWS.

Act iv. sc. 3. Pecunia's speech:—

No, he would ha' done,
That lay not in his power: he had the use
Of your bodies, Band and Wax, and sometimes Statute's.

Read (1815),

—he had the use of
Your bodies, &c.

Now, however, I doubt the legitimacy of my transposition of the 'of' from the beginning of this latter line to the end

[1] In 1664, at Bury St. Edmonds on the trial of Rose Cullender and Amy Duny. *Ed.*

of the one preceding;—for though it facilitates the metre and reading of the latter line, and is frequent in Massinger, this disjunction of the preposition from its case seems to have been disallowed by Jonson. Perhaps the better reading is—

O' your bodies, &c.—

the two syllables being slurred into one, or rather snatched, or sucked, up into the emphasized 'your.' In all points of view, therefore, Ben's judgment is just; for in this way, the line cannot be read, as metre, without that strong and quick emphasis on 'your' which the sense requires;—and had not the sense required an emphasis on 'your,' the *tmesis* of the sign of its cases 'of,' 'to,' &c. would destroy almost all boundary between the dramatic verse and prose in comedy:—a lesson not to be rash in conjectural amendments. 1818.

Ib. sc. 4.

P. jun. I love all men of virtue, *frommy* Princess.—

'Frommy,' *fromme*, pious, dutiful, &c.

Act v. sc. 4. Penny-boy sen. and Porter:—

I dare not, will not, think that honest Ben had Lear in his mind in this mock mad scene.

THE NEW INN.

Act i. sc. 1. Host's speech:—

A heavy purse, and then two turtles, *makes*.—

'MAKES,' frequent in old books, and even now used in some counties for mates, or pairs.

Ib. sc. 3. Host's speech:—

—And for a leap
O' the vaulting horse, to *play* the vaulting *house*.—

Instead of reading with Whalley 'ply' for 'play,' I would suggest 'horse' for 'house.' The meaning would then be obvious and pertinent. The punlet, or pun-maggot, or pun intentional, 'horse and house,' is below Jonson. The *jeu-de-mots* just below—

Read a lecture
Upon *Aqui*nas at St. Thomas à *Wate*rings—

had a learned smack in it to season its insipidity.

Ib. sc. 6. Lovel's speech :—

> Then shower'd his bounties on me, like the Hours,
> That open-handed sit upon the clouds,
> And press the liberality of heaven
> Down to the laps of thankful men!

Like many other similar passages in Jonson, this is ἰδοὺς χαλκοῦν ἰδεῖν—a sight which it is difficult to make one's self see,—a picture my fancy cannot copy detached from the words.

Act ii. sc. 5. Though it was hard upon old Ben, yet Felton, it must be confessed, was in the right in considering the Fly, Tipto, Bat Burst, &c. of this play mere dotages. Such a scene as this was enough to damn a new play; and Nick Stuff is worse still,—most abominable stuff indeed!

Act iii. sc. 2. Lovel's speech :—

> So knowledge first begets benevolence,
> Benevolence breeds friendship, friendship love.—

Jonson has elsewhere proceeded thus far; but the part most difficult and delicate, yet, perhaps, not the least capable of being both morally and poetically treated, is the union itself, and what, even in this life, it can be.

NOTES ON BEAUMONT AND FLETCHER.

Seward's Preface. 1750.

The King And No King, too, is extremely spirited in all its characters; Arbaces holds up a mirror to all men of virtuous principles but violent passions. Hence he is, as it were, at once magnanimity and pride, patience and fury, gentleness and rigour, chastity and incest, and is one of the finest mixtures of virtues and vices that any poet has drawn, &c.

THESE are among the endless instances of the abject state to which pyschology had sunk from the reign of Charles I. to the middle of the present reign of George III.; and even now it is but just awaking.

Ib. Seward's comparison of Julia's speech in the Two Gentlemen of Verona, act iv. last scene—

Madam, 'twas Ariadne passioning, &c.

with Aspatia's speech in the Maid's Tragedy—

I stand upon the sea-beach now, &c. Act ii.

and preference of the latter.

It is strange to take an incidental passage of one writer, intended only for a subordinate part, and compare it with the same thought in another writer, who had chosen it for a prominent and principal figure.

Ib. Seward's preference of Alphonso's poisoning in A Wife for a Month, act i. sc. 1, to the passage in King John, act v. sc. 7,—

Poison'd, ill fare! dead, forsook, cast off!

Mr. Seward! Mr. Seward! you may be, and I trust you are, an angel; but you were an ass.

Ib.

Every reader of *taste* will see how superior this is to the quotation from Shakspeare.

Of what taste?

Ib. Seward's classification of the plays:—

Surely Monsieur Thomas, the Chances, Beggar's Bush, and the Pilgrim, should have been placed in the very first class! But the whole attempt ends in a woful failure.

HARRIS'S COMMENDATORY POEM ON FLETCHER.

I'd have a state of wit convok'd, which hath
A *power* to take up on common faith:—

This is an instance of that modifying of quantity by emphasis, without which our elder poets cannot be scanned. 'Power,' here, instead of being one long syllable—pow'r—must be sounded, not indeed as a spondee, nor yet as a trochee; but as —˘ ∪ ;—the first syllable is 1¼.

We can, indeed, never expect an authentic edition of our elder dramatic poets (for in those times a drama was a poem), until some man undertakes the work, who has studied the philosophy of metre. This has been found

the main torch of sound restoration in the Greek dramatists by Bentley, Porson, and their followers;—how much more, then, in writers in our own language! It is true that quantity, an almost iron law with the Greek, is in English rather a subject for a peculiarly fine ear, than any law or even rule; but, then, instead of it, we have, first, accent; secondly, emphasis; and lastly, retardation, and acceleration of the times of syllables according to the meaning of the words, the passion that accompanies them, and even the character of the person that uses them. With due attention to these,—above all, to that, which requires the most attention and the finest taste, the character, Massinger, for example, might be reduced to a rich and yet regular metre. But then the *regulæ* must be first known; —though I will venture to say, that he who does not find a line (not corrupted) of Massinger's flow to the time total of a trimeter catalectic iambic verse, has not read it aright. But by virtue of the last principle—the retardation or acceleration of time—we have the proceleusmatic foot ∪∪∪∪, and the *dispondæus* – – – – – –, not to mention the *choriambus*, the ionics, pæons, and epitrites. Since Dryden, the metre of our poets leads to the sense: in our elder and more genuine bards, the sense, including the passion, leads to the metre. Read even Donne's satires as he meant them to be read, and as the sense and passion demand, and you will find in the lines a manly harmony.

LIFE OF FLETCHER IN STOCKDALE'S EDITION. 1811.

In general their plots are more regular than Shakspeare's.—

THIS is true, if true at all, only before a court of critic*ism*, which judges one scheme by the laws of another a*nd a* diverse one. Shakspeare's plots have their own law*s or* *regulæ*, and according to these they are regular.

MAID'S TRAGEDY.

Act i. The metrical arrangement is most *ɔvenly* throughout.

Strat. As well as masque can be, &c.

and all that follows to 'who is return'd'—is plainly blank verse, and falls easily into it.

Ib. Speech of Melantius :—

> These soft and silken wars are not for me :
> The music must be shrill, and all confus'd,
> That stirs my blood ; and then I dance with arms.

What strange self-trumpeters and tongue-bullies all the brave soldiers of Beaumont and Fletcher are ! Yet I am inclined to think it was the fashion of the age from the Soldier's speech in the Counter Scuffle ; and deeper than the fashion B. and F. did not fathom.

Ib. Speech of Lysippus :—

> Yes, but this lady
> Walks discontented, with her wat'ry eyes
> Bent on the earth, &c.

Opulent as Shakspeare was, and of his opulence prodigal, ie yet would not have put this exquisite piece of poetry n the mouth of a no-character, or as addressed to a Melantius. I wish that B. and F. had written poems nstead of tragedies.

Ib.

> *Mel.* I might run fiercely, not more hastily,
> Upon my foe.

Read

> I might rūn *mŏre* fiercelў, not more hastily.—

Ib. Speech of Calianax :—

> Office ! I would I could put it off ! I am sure I sweat quite through my office !

The syllable *off* reminds the testy statesman of his robe, and he carries on the image.

Ib. Speech of Melantius :—

> —Would that blood,
> That sea of blood, that I have lost in fight, &c.

All B. and F.'s generals are pugilists, or cudgel-fighters, that boast of their bottom and of the *claret* they have shed.

Ib. The Masque ;—Cinthia's speech :—

> But I will give a greater state and glory,
> And raise to time a *noble* memōry
> Of what these lovers are.

I suspect that 'nobler,' pronounced as 'nobiler' — ∪ —,

was the poet's word, and that the accent is to be placed on the penultimate of 'memory.' As to the passage—

> Yet, while our reign lasts, let us stretch our power, &c.

removed from the text of Cinthia's speech by these foolish editors as unworthy of B. and F.—the first eight lines are not worse, and the last couplet incomparably better, than the stanza retained.

Act ii. Amintor's speech :—

> Oh, thou hast nam'd a word, that wipes away
> All thoughts revengeful! In that sacred name,
> 'The king,' there lies a terror.

It is worth noticing that of the three greatest tragedians, Massinger was a democrat, Beaumont and Fletcher the most servile *jure divino* royalist, and Shakspeare a philosopher ;—if aught personal, an aristocrat.

A KING AND NO KING.

Act iv. Speech of Tigranes :—

> She, that forgat the greatness of her grief
> And miseries, that must follow such mad passions,
> Endless and wild as women! &c.

SEWARD'S note and suggestion of 'in.'

It would be amusing to learn from some existing friend of Mr. Seward what he meant, or rather dreamed, in this note. It is certainly a difficult passage, of which there are two solutions ,—one, that the writer was somewhat more injudicious than usual ;—the other, that he was very, very much more profound and Shakspearian than usual. Seward's emendation, at all events, is right and obvious. Were it a passage of Shakspeare, I should not hesitate to interpret it as characteristic of Tigranes' state of mind, disliking the very virtues, and therefore half-consciously representing them as mere products of the violence of the sex in general in all their whims, and yet forced to admire, and to feel and to express gratitude for, the exertion in his own instance. The inconsistency of the passage would be the consistency of the author. But this is above Beaumont and Fletcher.

THE SCORNFUL LADY.

Act ii. Sir Roger's speech :—

Did I for this consume my *quarters* in meditations, vows, and woo'd her in heroical epistles? Did I expound the Owl, and undertake, with labour and expense, the recollection of those thousand pieces, consum'd in cellars and tobacco-shops, of that our honour'd Englishman, Nic. Broughton? &c.

STRANGE, that neither Mr. Theobald, nor Mr. Seward, should have seen that this mock heroic speech is in full-mouthed blank verse! Had they seen this, they would have seen that 'quarters' is a substitution of the players for 'quires' or 'squares,' (that is) of paper :—

Consume my quires in meditations, vows,
And woo'd her in heroical epistles.

They ought, likewise, to have seen that the abbreviated 'Ni. Br.' of the text was properly 'Mi. Dr.'—and that Michael Drayton, not Nicholas Broughton, is here ridiculed for his poem The Owl and his Heroical Epistles.

Ib. Speech of Younger Loveless :—

Fill him some wine. Thou dost not see me mov'd, &c.

These Editors ought to have learnt, that scarce an instance occurs in B. and F. of a long speech not in metre. This is plain staring blank verse.

THE CUSTOM OF THE COUNTRY.

I CANNOT but think that in a country conquered by a nobler race than the natives, and in which the latter became villeins and bondsmen, this custom, *lex merchetæ*, may have been introduced for wise purposes,—as of improving the breed, lessening the antipathy of different races, and producing a new bond of relationship between the lord and the tenant, who, as the eldest born, would, at least, have a chance of being, and a probability of being thought, the lord's child. In the West Indies it cannot have these effects, because the mulatto is marked by nature different from the father, and because there is no bond, no law, no custom, but of mere debauchery. 1815.

Act i. sc. 1. Rutilio's speech :—

> Yet if you play not fair play, &c.

Evidently to be transposed and read thus :—

> Yet if you play not fair, above-board too,
> I'll tell you what—
> I've a foolish engine here :—I say no more—
> But if your Honour's guts are not enchanted—

Licentious as the comic metre of B. and F. is,—a far more lawless, and yet far less happy, imitation of the rhythm of animated talk in real life than Massinger's—still it is made worse than it really is by ignorance of the halves, thirds, and two-thirds of a line which B. and F. adopted from the Italian and Spanish dramatists. Thus in Rutilio's speech :—

> Though I confess
> Any man would desire to have her, and by any means, &c.

Correct the whole passage—

> Though I confess
> Any man would
> Desire to have her, and by any means,
> At any rate too, yet this common hangman
> That hath whipt off a thōusand māids' heāds already—
> That he should glean the harvest, sticks in my stomach !

In all comic metres the gulping of short syllables, and the abbreviation of syllables ordinarily long by the rapid pronunciation of eagerness and vehemence, are not so much a license, as a law,—a faithful copy of nature, and let them be read characteristically, the times will be found nearly equal. Thus the three words marked above make a *choriambus* — ∪ ∪ —, or perhaps a *pæon primus* — ∪ ∪ ∪ ; a dactyl, by virtue of comic rapidity, being only equal to an iambus when distinctly pronounced. I have no doubt that all B. and F.'s works might be safely corrected by attention to this rule, and that the editor is entitled to transpositions of all kinds, and to not a few omissions. For the rule of the metre once lost—what was to restrain the actors from interpolation ?

THE ELDER BROTHER.

Act i. sc. 2. Charles's speech :—

> —For what concerns tillage,
> Who better can deliver it than Virgil
> In his Georgicks ? and to cure your herds,
> His Bucolicks is a master-piece.

FLETCHER was too good a scholar to fall into so gross a blunder, as Messrs. Sympson and Colman suppose. I read the passage thus :

> —For what concerns tillage,
> Who better can deliver it than Virgil,
> In his Gĕōrgicks, *or* to cure your herds ;
> (His Bucolicks are a master-piece.) But when, &c.

Jealous of Virgil's honour, he is afraid lest, by referring to the Georgics alone, he might be understood as undervaluing the preceding work. 'Not that I do not admire the Bucolics, too, in their way :—But when, &c.'

Act iii. sc. 3. Charles's speech :—

> —She has a face looks like a *story ;*
> The *story* of the heavens looks very like her.

Seward reads 'glory ;' and Theobald quotes from Philaster—

> That reads the story of a woman's face.—

I can make sense of this passage as little as Mr. Seward ; —the passage from Philaster is nothing to the purpose. Instead of 'a story,' I have sometimes thought of proposing 'Astræa.'

Ib. Angellina's speech :—

> —You're old and dim, Sir,
> And the shadow of the earth eclips'd your judgment.

Inappropriate to Angellina, but one of the finest lines in our language.

Act iv. sc. 3. Charles's speech :—

> And lets the serious part of life run by
> As thin neglected sand, whiteness of name.
> You must be mine, &c.

Seward's note, and reading—

> —Whiteness of name,
> You must be mine !

Nonsense! 'Whiteness of name' is in apposition to 'the serious part of life,' and means a deservedly pure reputation. The following line—'You *must* be mine!' means—'Though I do not enjoy you to-day, I shall hereafter, and without reproach.'

THE SPANISH CURATE.

Act iv. sc. 7. Amaranta's speech :—

> And still I push'd him on, as he had been *coming*.

PERHAPS the true word is 'conning,' that is, learning, or reading, and therefore inattentive.

WIT WITHOUT MONEY.

Act i. Valentine's speech :—

> One without substance, &c.

THE present text, and that proposed by Seward, are equally vile. I have endeavoured to make the lines sense, though the whole is, I suspect, incurable except by bold conjectural reformation. I would read thus :—

> One without substance of herself, that's woman;
> Without the pleasure of her life, that's wanton;
> Tho' she be young, forgetting it; tho' fair,
> Making her glass the eyes of honest men,
> Not her own admiration.

'That's wanton,' or, 'that is to say, wantonness.'

Act ii. Valentine's speech :—

> Of half-a-crown a week for pins and puppets—
>
> As there is a syllable wanting in the measure here. Seward.

A syllable wanting! Had this Seward neither ears nor fingers? The line is a more than usually regular iambic hendecasyllable.

Ib.

> With one man satisfied, with one rein guided;
> With one faith, one content, one bed;
> *Aged*, she makes the wife, preserves the fame and issue;
> A widow is, &c.

Is 'apaid'—contented—too obsolete for B. and F.? If not, we might read it thus :—

> Content with one faith, with one bed apaid,
> She makes the wife, preserves the fame and issue ;—

Or it may be—

> —with one breed apaid—

that is, satisfied with one set of children, in opposition to—

> A widow is a Christmas-box, &c.

Colman's note on Seward's attempt to put this play into metre.

The editors, and their contemporaries in general, were ignorant of any but the regular iambic verse. A study of the Aristophanic and Plautine metres would have enabled them to reduce B. and F. throughout into metre, except where prose is really intended.

THE HUMOROUS LIEUTENANT.

Act i. sc. 1. Second Ambassador's speech :—

> —When your angers,
> *Like* so many brother billows, rose together,
> And, curling up *your* foaming crests, defied, &c.

THIS worse than superfluous 'like' is very like an interpolation of some matter of fact critic—all *pus, prose atque venenum*. The 'your' in the next line, instead of 'their,' is likewise yours, Mr. Critic!

Act ii. sc. 1. Timon's speech :—

> Another of a new *way* will be look'd at.—

We must suspect the poets wrote, 'of a new *day*.' So immediately after,

> ——Time may
> For all his wisdom, yet give us a day.
> SEWARD'S NOTE.

For this very reason I more than suspect the contrary.

Ib. sc. 3. Speech of Leucippe :—

> I'll put her into action for a *wastcoat*.—

What we call a riding-habit,—some mannish dress.

THE MAD LOVER.

Act iv. Masque of beasts :—

> —This goodly tree,
> An usher that still grew before his lady,
> Wither'd at root : this, for he could not woo,
> A grumbling lawyer : &c.

HERE must have been omitted a line rhyming to 'tree ;' and the words of the next line have been transposed :—

> —This goodly tree,
> *Which leafless, and obscur'd with moss you see,*
> An usher this, that 'fore his lady grew,
> Wither'd at root : this, for he could not woo, &c.

THE LOYAL SUBJECT.

IT is well worthy of notice, and yet has not been, I believe, noticed hitherto, what a marked difference there exists in the dramatic writers of the Elizabetho-Jacobæan age—(Mercy on me ! what a phrase for 'the writers during the reigns of Elizabeth and James I. !')—in respect of their political opinions. Shakspeare, in this as in all other things, himself and alone, gives the permanent politics of human nature, and the only predilection, which appears, shews itself in his contempt of mobs and the populacy. Massinger is a decided Whig ;—Beaumont and Fletcher high-flying, passive-obedience Tories. The Spanish dramatists furnished them with this, as with many other ingredients. By the by, an accurate and familiar acquaintance with all the productions of the Spanish stage previously to 1620, is an indispensable qualification for an editor of B. and F. ;—and with this qualification a most interesting and instructive edition might be given. This edition of Colman's (Stockdale 1811,) is below criticism.

In metre, B. and F. are inferior to Shakspeare, on the one hand, as expressing the poetic part of the drama, and to Massinger, on the other, in the art of reconciling metre with the natural rhythm of conversation,—in which, indeed, Massinger is unrivalled. Read him aright, and measure by time, not syllables, and no lines can be more legitimate,—none in which the substitution of equipollent

feet, and the modifications by emphasis, are managed with such exquisite judgment. B. and F. are fond of the twelve syllable (not Alexandrine) line, as—

Too many fears 'tis thought too: and to nourish those—

This has, often, a good effect, and is one of the varieties most common in Shakspeare.

RULE A WIFE AND HAVE A WIFE.

Act iii. Old Woman's speech:—

—I fear he will knock my
Brains out for lying.

MR. SEWARD discards the words 'for lying,' because 'most of the things spoke of Estifania are true, with only a little exaggeration, and because they destroy all appearance of measure.' Colman's note.

Mr. Seward had his brains out. The humour lies in Estifania's having ordered the Old Woman to tell these tales of her; for though an intriguer, she is not represented as other than chaste; and as to the metre, it is perfectly correct.

Ib.

Marg. As you love me, give way.
Leon. It shall be better, I will give none, madam, &c.

The meaning is: 'It shall be a better way, first;—as it is, I will not give it, or any that you in your present mood would wish.'

THE LAWS OF CANDY.

Act i. Speech of Melitus:—

Whose insolence and never yet match'd pride
Can by no character be well express'd,
But in her only name, the proud Erota.

COLMAN'S note.

The poet intended no allusion to the word 'Erota' itself; but says that her very name, 'the proud Erota,'

became a character and adage; as we say, a Quixote or a Brutus: so to say an 'Erota,' expressed female pride and insolence of beauty.

Ib. Speech of Antinous:—

> Of my peculiar honours, not deriv'd
> From *successary*, but purchas'd with my blood.—

The poet doubtless wrote 'successry,' which, though not adopted in our language, would be, on many occasions, as here, a much more significant phrase than ancestry.

THE LITTLE FRENCH LAWYER.

Act i. sc. 1. Dinant's speech:—

> Are you become a patron too? 'Tis a new one,
> No more on't, &c.

Seward reads:—

> Are you become a patron too? *How long*
> *Have you been conning this speech?* 'Tis a new one, &c.

If conjectural emendation, like this, be allowed, we might venture to read:—

> Are you become a patron *to a new tune?*

or,

> Are you become a patron? 'Tis a new *tune.*

Ib.

> *Din.* Thou wouldst not willingly
> Live a protested coward, or be call'd one?
> *Cler.* Words are but words.
> *Din.* Nor wouldst thou take a blow?

Seward's note.

O miserable! Dinant sees through Cleremont's gravity, and the actor is to explain it. 'Words are but words,' is the last struggle of affected morality.

VALENTINIAN.

Act i. sc. 3.

It is a real trial of charity to read this scene with tolerable temper towards Fletcher. So very slavish—so reptile—

are the feelings and sentiments represented as duties. And yet remember he was a bishop's son, and the duty to God was the supposed basis.

Personals, including body, house, home, and religion; —property, subordination, and inter-community;—these are the fundamentals of society. I, mean here, religion negatively taken,—so that the person be not compelled to do or utter, in relation of the soul to God, what would be, in that person, a lie;—such as to force a man to go to church, or to swear that he believes what he does not believe. Religion, positively taken, may be a great and useful privilege, but cannot be a right,—were it for this only that it cannot be pre-defined. The ground of this distinction between negative and positive religion, as a social right, is plain. No one of my fellow-citizens is encroached on by my not declaring to him what I believe respecting the super-sensual; but should every man be entitled to preach against the preacher, who could hear any preacher? Now it is different in respect of loyalty. There we have positive rights, but not negative rights;— for every pretended negative would be in effect a positive; —as if a soldier had a right to keep to himself, whether he would, or would not, fight. Now, no one of these fundamentals can be rightfully attacked, except when the guardian of it has abused it to subvert one or more of the rest. The reason is, that the guardian, as a fluent, is less than the permanent which he is to guard. He is the temporary and mutable mean, and derives his whole value from the end. In short, as robbery is not high treason, so neither is every unjust act of a king the converse. All must be attacked and endangered. Why? Because the king, as *a.* to A., is a mean to A. or subordination, in a far higher sense than a proprietor, as *b.* to B. is a mean to B. or property.

Act ii. sc. 2. Claudia's speech:—

Chimney-pieces! &c.

The whole of this speech seems corrupt; and if accurately printed,—that is, if the same in all the prior editions, irremediable but by bold conjecture. '*Till* my tackle,' should be, I think, *while*, &c.

Act iii. sc. 1. B. and F. always write as if virtue or goodness were a sort of talisman, or strange something,

that might be lost without the least fault on the part of the owner. In short their chaste ladies value their chastity as a material thing,—not as an act or state of being; and this mere thing being imaginary, no wonder that all their women are represented with the minds of strumpets, except a few irrational humorists, far less capable of exciting our sympathy than a Hindoo, who has had a bason of cow-broth thrown over him;—for this, though a debasing superstition, is still real, and we might pity the poor wretch, though we cannot help despising him. But B. and F.'s Lucinas are clumsy fictions. It is too plain that the authors had no one idea of chastity as a virtue, but only such a conception as a blind man might have of the power of seeing, by handling an ox's eye. In The Queen of Corinth, indeed, they talk differently; but it is all talk, and nothing is real in it but the dread of losing a reputation. Hence the frightful contrast between their women (even those who are meant for virtuous) and Shakspeare's. So, for instance, The Maid in the Mill:—a woman must not merely have grown old in brothels, but have chuckled over every abomination committed in them with a rampant sympathy of imagination, to have had her fancy so drunk with the *minutiæ* of lechery as this icy chaste virgin evinces hers to have been.

It would be worth while to note how many of these plays are founded on rapes,—how many on incestuous passions, and how many on mere lunacies. Then their virtuous women are either crazy superstitions of a merely bodily negation of having been acted on, or strumpets in their imaginations and wishes, or, as in this Maid in the Mill, both at the same time. In the men, the love is merely lust in one direction,—exclusive preference of one object. The tyrant's speeches are mostly taken from the mouths of indignant denouncers of the tyrant's character, with the substitution of 'I' for 'he,' and the omission of the prefatory 'he acts as if he thought' so and so. The only feelings they can possibly excite are disgust at the Aeciuses, if regarded as sane loyalists, or compassion, if considered as Bedlamites. So much for their tragedies. But even their comedies are, most of them, disturbed by the fantasticalness, or gross caricature, of the persons or incidents. There are few characters that you can really like,—(even though you should have erased from your mind all the

filth which bespatters the most likeable of them, as Piniero in The Island Princess for instance,)—scarcely one whom you can love. How different this from Shakspeare, who makes one have a sort of sneaking affection even for his Barnardines;—whose very Iagos and Richards are awful, and, by the counteracting power of profound intellects, rendered fearful rather than hateful;—and even the exceptions, as Goneril and Regan, are proofs of superlative judgment and the finest moral tact, in being left utter monsters, *nulla virtute redemptæ*, and in being kept out of sight as much as possible,—they being, indeed, only means for the excitement and deepening of noblest emotions towards the Lear, Cordelia, &c. and employed with the severest economy! But even Shakspeare's grossness—that which is really so, independently of the increase in modern times of vicious associations with things indifferent—(for there is a state of manners conceivable so pure, that the language of Hamlet at Ophelia's feet might be a harmless rallying, or playful teazing, of a shame that would exist in Paradise)—at the worst, how diverse in kind is it from Beaumont and Fletcher's! In Shakspeare it is the mere generalities of sex, mere words for the most part, seldom or never distinct images, all head-work, and fancy-drolleries; there is no sensation supposed in the speaker. I need not proceed to contrast this with B. and F.

ROLLO.

This is, perhaps, the most energetic of Fletcher's tragedies. He evidently aimed at a new Richard III. in Rollo;—but as in all his other imitations of Shakspeare, he was not philosopher enough to bottom his original. Thus, in Rollo, he has produced a mere personification of outrageous wickedness, with no fundamental characteristic impulses to make either the tyrant's words or actions philosophically intelligible. Hence the most pathetic situations border on the horrible, and what he meant for the terrible, is either hateful, τὸ μισητὸν, or ludicrous. The scene of Baldwin's sentence in the third act is probably the grandest working of passion in all B. and F.'s dramas;—but the very magnificence of filial affection given to Edith, in this

noble scene, renders the after scene—(in imitation of one of the least Shakspearian of all Shakspeare's works, if it be his, the scene between Richard and Lady Anne,)—in which Edith is yielding to a few words and tears, not only unnatural, but disgusting. In Shakspeare, Lady Anne is described as a weak, vain, very woman throughout.

Act i. sc. 1.

> *Gis.* He is indeed the perfect character
> Of a good man, and so his actions speak him.

This character of Aubrey, and the whole spirit of this and several other plays of the same authors, are interesting as traits of the morals which it was fashionable to teach in the reigns of James I. and his successor, who died a martyr to them. Stage, pulpit, law, fashion,—all conspired to enslave the realm. Massinger's plays breathe the opposite spirit; Shakspeare's the spirit of wisdom which is for all ages. By the by, the Spanish dramatists —Calderon, in particular,—had some influence in this respect, of romantic loyalty to the greatest monsters, as well as in the busy intrigues of B. and F.'s plays.

THE WILDGOOSE CHASE.

Act ii. sc. 1. Belleur's speech:—

> —That wench, methinks,
> If I were but well set on, for she is *a fable*,
> If I were but hounded right, and one to teach me.

SYMPSON reads 'affable,' which Colman rejects, and says, 'the next line seems to enforce' the reading in the text.

Pity, that the editor did not explain wherein the sense, 'seemingly enforced by the next line,' consists. May the true word be 'a sable,' that is, a black fox, hunted for its precious fur? Or 'at-able,'—as we now say,—'she is come-at-able?'

A WIFE FOR A MONTH.

Act iv. sc. 1. Alphonso's speech :—

> Betwixt the cold bear and the raging lion
> Lies my safe way.

Seward's note and alteration to—

> 'Twixt the cold bears, far from the raging lion—

THIS Mr. Seward is a blockhead of the provoking species. In his itch for correction, he forgot the words—'lies my safe way!' The Bear is the extreme pole, and thither he would travel over the space contained between it and 'the raging lion.'

THE PILGRIM.

Act iv. sc. 2.

ALINDA'S interview with her father is lively, and happily hit off; but this scene with Roderigo is truly excellent. Altogether, indeed, this play holds the first place in B. and F.'s romantic entertainments, *Lustspiele*, which collectively are their happiest performances, and are only inferior to the romance of Shakspeare in the As You Like It, Twelfth Night, &c.

Ib.

> *Alin.* To-day you shall wed Sorrow,
> And Repentance will come to-morrow.

Read 'Pentience,' or else—

> Repentance, she will come to-morrow.

THE QUEEN OF CORINTH.

Act ii. sc. 1.

MERIONE'S speech. Had the scene of this tragi-comedy been laid in Hindostan instead of Corinth, and the gods here addressed been the Veeshnoo and Co. of the Indian Pantheon, this rant would not have been much amiss.

In respect of style and versification, this play and the following of Bonduca may be taken as the best, and yet as characteristic, specimens of Beaumont and Fletcher's dramas. I particularly instance the first scene of the Bonduca. Take Shakspeare's Richard II., and having selected some one scene of about the same number of lines, and consisting mostly of long speeches, compare it with the first scene in Bonduca,—not for the idle purpose of finding out which is the better, but in order to see and understand the difference. The latter, that of B. and F., you will find a well arranged bed of flowers, each having its separate root, and its position determined aforehand by the will of the gardener,—each fresh plant a fresh volition. In the former you see an Indian figtree, as described by Milton; — all is growth, evolution, γένεσις; — each line, each word almost, begets the following, and the will of the writer is an interfusion, a continuous agency, and not a series of separate acts. Shakspeare is the height, breadth, and depth of Genius: Beaumont and Fletcher the excellent mechanism, in juxta-position and succession, of talent.

THE NOBLE GENTLEMAN.

WHY have the dramatists of the times of Elizabeth, James I. and the first Charles become almost obsolete, with the exception of Shakspeare? Why do they no longer belong to the English, being once so popular? And why is Shakspeare an exception?—One thing, among fifty, necessary to the full solution is, that they all employed poetry and poetic diction on unpoetic subjects, both characters and situations, especially in their comedy. Now Shakspeare is all, all ideal,—of no time, and therefore for all times. Read, for instance, Marine's panegyric in the first scene of this play:—

> Know
> The eminent court, to them that can be wise,
> And fasten on her blessings, is a sun, &c.

What can be more unnatural and inappropriate,—(not only is, but must be felt as such)—than such poetry in the mouth of a silly dupe? In short, the scenes are mock dialogues, in which the poet *solus* plays the ventriloquist, but cannot keep down his own way of expressing himself.

Heavy complaints have been made respecting the transposing of the old plays by Cibber; but it never occurred to these critics to ask, how it came that no one ever attempted to transpose a comedy of Shakspeare's.

THE CORONATION.

Act i. Speech of Seleucus :—

> Altho' he be my enemy, should any
> Of the gay flies that buz about the court,
> *Sit* to catch trouts i' the summer, tell me so,
> I durst, &c.

Colman's note. "

PSHAW! 'Sit' is either a misprint for 'set,' or the old and still provincial word for 'set,' as the participle passive of 'seat' or 'set.' I have heard an old Somersetshire gardener say :—" Look, Sir! I set these plants here; those yonder I *sit* yesterday."

Act ii. Speech of Arcadius :—

> Nay, some will swear they love their mistress,
> Would hazard lives and fortunes, &c.

Read thus :—

> Nay, some will swear they love their mistress so,
> They would hazard lives and fortunes to preserve
> One of her hairs brighter than Berenice's,
> Or young Apollo's; and yet, after this, &c.

'Thĕy woŭld hāzard'—furnishes an anapæst for an *iambus*. 'And yet,' which must be read, *anyĕt*, is an instance of the enclitic force in an accented monosyllable. 'Aňd yēt,' is a complete *iambus*; but *anyet* is, like *spirit*, a dibrach ∪ ∪, trocheized, however, by the *arsis* or first accent damping, though not extinguishing, the second.

WIT AT SEVERAL WEAPONS.

Act i. Oldcraft's speech :

> I'm arm'd at all points, &c.

IT would be very easy to restore all this passage to metre, by supplying a sentence of four syllables, which the reason-

ing almost demands, and by correcting the grammar. Read thus :—

> Arm'd at all points 'gainst treachery, I hold
> My humour firm. If, living, I can see thee
> Thrive by thy wits, I shall have the more courage,
> Dying, to trust thee with my lands. If not,
> The best wit, I can hear of, carries them.
> For since so many in my time and knowledge,
> Rich children of the city, have concluded
> *For lack of wit* in beggary, I'd rather
> Make a wise stranger my executor,
> Than a fool son my heir, and have my lands call'd
> After my wit than name : and that's my nature !

Ib. Oldcraft's speech :—

> To prevent which I have sought out a match for her.—

Read

> Which to prevent I've sought a match out for her.

Ib. Sir Gregory's speech : —

> ——Do you think
> I'll have any of the wits hang upon me after I am married once ?

Read it thus :—

> Do you think
> That I'll have any of the wits to hang
> Upon me after I am married once ?

and afterwards—

> Is it a fashion in London
> To marry a woman, and to never see her ?

The superfluous 'to' gives it the Sir Andrew Ague-cheek character.

THE FAIR MAID OF THE INN.

Act ii. Speech of Albertus :—

> But, Sir,
> By my life, I vow to take assurance from you,
> That right hand never more shall strike my son,
> * * * * * * *
> Chop his hand off !

In this (as, indeed, in all other respects ; but most in this) it is that Shakspeare is so incomparably superior to Fletcher

and his friend,—in judgment! What can be conceived more unnatural and motiveless than this brutal resolve? How is it possible to feel the least interest in Albertus afterwards? or in Cesario after his conduct?

THE TWO NOBLE KINSMEN.

On comparing the prison scene of Palamon and Arcite, Act ii. sc. 2, with the dialogue between the same speakers, Act i. sc. 2, I can scarcely retain a doubt as to the first act's having been written by Shakspeare. Assuredly it was not written by B. and F. I hold Jonson more probable than either of these two.

The main presumption, however, for Shakspeare's share in this play rests on a point, to which the sturdy critics of this edition (and indeed all before them) were blind,—that is, the construction of the blank verse, which proves beyond all doubt an intentional imitation, if not the proper hand, of Shakspeare. Now, whatever improbability there is in the former, (which supposes Fletcher conscious of the inferiority, the too poematic *minus*-dramatic nature, of his versification, and of which there is neither proof, nor likelihood), adds so much to the probability of the latter. On the other hand, the harshness of many of these very passages, a harshness unrelieved by any lyrical interbreathings, and still more the want of profundity in the thoughts, keep me from an absolute decision.

Act i. sc. 3. Emilia's speech:—

> ——Since his depart, his *sports*,
> Tho' craving seriousness and skill, &c.

I conjecture 'imports,' that is, duties or offices of importance. The flow of the versification in this speech seems to demand the trochaic ending — o; while the text blends jingle and *hisses* to the annoyance of less sensitive ears than Fletcher's—not to say, Shakspeare's.

THE WOMAN HATER.

Act i. sc. 2.

THIS scene from the beginning is prose printed as blank verse, down to the line—

E'en all the valiant stomachs in the court—

where the verse recommences. This transition from the prose to the verse enhances, and indeed forms, the comic effect. Lazarillo concludes his soliloquy with a hymn to the goddess of plenty.

A COURSE OF LECTURES.

PROSPECTUS.

THERE are few families, at present, in the higher and middle classes of English society, in which literary topics and the productions of the Fine Arts, in some one or other of their various forms, do not occasionally take their turn in contributing to the entertainment of the social board, and the amusement of the circle at the fire side. The acquisitions and attainments of the intellect ought, indeed, to hold a very inferior rank in our estimation, opposed to moral worth, or even to professional and specific skill, prudence, and industry. But why should they be opposed, when they may be made subservient merely by being subordinated? It can rarely happen, that a man of social disposition, altogether a stranger to subjects of taste, (almost the only ones on which persons of both sexes can converse with a common interest) should through the world without at times feeling dissatisfied with himself. The best proof of this is to be found in the marked anxiety which men, who have succeeded in life without the aid of these accomplishments, shew in securing them to their children. A young man of ingenuous mind will not wilfully deprive himself of any species of respect. He will wish to feel himself on a level with the average of the society in which he lives, though he may be ambitious of distinguishing himself only in his own immediate pursuit or occupation.

Under this conviction, the following Course of Lectures was planned. The several titles will best explain the particular subjects and purposes of each: but the main objects proposed, as the result of all, are the two following.

1. To convey, in a form best fitted to render them impressive at the time, and remembered afterwards, rules and principles of sound judgment, with a kind and degree of connected information, such as the hearers cannot

generally be supposed likely to form, collect, and arrange for themselves, by their own unassisted studies. It might be presumption to say, that any important part of these Lectures could not be derived from books; but none, I trust, in supposing, that the same information could not be so surely or conveniently acquired from such books as are of commonest occurrence, or with that quantity of time and attention which can be reasonably expected, or even wisely desired, of men engaged in business and the active duties of the world.

2. Under a strong persuasion that little of real value is derived by persons in general from a wide and various reading; but still more deeply convinced as to the actual mischief of unconnected and promiscuous reading, and that it is sure, in a greater or less degree, to enervate even where it does not likewise inflate; I hope to satisfy many an ingenuous mind, seriously interested in its own development and cultivation, how moderate a number of volumes, if only they be judiciously chosen, will suffice for the attainment of every wise and desirable purpose; that is, in addition to those which he studies for specific and professional purposes. It is saying less than the truth to affirm, that an excellent book, (and the remark holds almost equally good of a Raphael as of a Milton) is like a well chosen and well tended fruit tree. Its fruits are not of one season only. With the due and natural intervals, we may recur to it year after year, and it will supply the same nourishment and the same gratification, if only we ourselves return to it with the same healthful appetite.

The subjects of the Lectures are indeed very different, but not, (in the strict sense of the term) diverse; they are various, rather than miscellaneous. There is this bond of connexion common to them all,—that the mental pleasure which they are calculated to excite, is not dependent on accidents of fashion, place, or age, or the events or the customs of the day; but commensurate with the good sense, taste, and feeling, to the cultivation of which they themselves so largely contribute, as being all in kind, though not all in the same degree, productions of genius.

What it would be arrogant to promise, I may yet be permitted to hope,—that the execution will prove correspondent and adequate to the plan. Assuredly, my best efforts have not been wanting so to select and prepare

the materials, that, at the conclusion of the Lectures, an attentive auditor, who should consent to aid his future recollection by a few notes taken either during each Lecture, or soon after, would rarely feel himself, for the time to come, excluded, from taking an intelligent interest in any general conversation likely to occur in mixed society.

Syllabus of the Course.

I. January 27, 1818.—On the manners, morals, literature, philosophy, religion, and the state of society in general, in European Christendom, from the eighth to the fifteenth century, (that is from A.D. 700, to A.D. 1400), more particularly in reference to England, France, Italy, and Germany; in other words, a portrait of the so-called dark ages of Europe.

II. January 30.—On the tales and metrical romances common, for the most part, to England, Germany, and the north of France, and on the English songs and ballads, continued to the reign of Charles I. A few selections will be made from the Swedish, Danish, and German languages, translated for the purpose by the Lecturer.

III. February 3.—Chaucer and Spenser; of Petrarch; of Ariosto, Pulci, and Boiardo.

IV. V. VI. February 6, 10, 13.—On the dramatic works of Shakspeare. In these Lectures will be comprised the substance of Mr. Coleridge's former courses on the same subject, enlarged and varied by subsequent study and reflection.

VII. February 17.—On Ben Jonson, Beaumont and Fletcher, and Massinger; with the probable causes of the cessation of dramatic poetry in England with Shirley and Otway, soon after the restoration of Charles II.

VIII. February 20.—Of the life and all the works of Cervantes, but chiefly of his Don Quixote. The ridicule of knight errantry shewn to have been but a secondary object in the mind of the author, and not the principal cause of the delight which the work continues to give to all nations, and under all the revolutions of manners and opinions.

IX. February 24.—On Rabelais, Swift, and Sterne: on the nature and constituents of genuine Humour, and

on the distinctions of the Humorous from the Witty, the Fanciful, the Droll, and the Odd.

X. February 27.—Of Donne, Dante, and Milton.

XI. March 3.—On the Arabian Nights' Entertainments, and on the romantic use of the supernatural in poetry, and in works of fiction not poetical. On the conditions and regulations under which such books may be employed advantageously in the earlier periods of education.

XII. March 6.—On tales of witches, apparitions, &c. as distinguished from the magic and magicians of Asiatic origin. The probable sources of the former, and of the belief in them in certain ages and classes of men. Criteria by which mistaken and exaggerated facts may be distinguished from absolute falsehood and imposture. Lastly, the causes of the terror and interest which stories of ghosts and witches inspire, in early life at least, whether believed or not.

XIII. March 10.—On colour, sound, and form in Nature, as connected with poesy: the word "Poesy" used as the generic or class term, including poetry, music, painting, statuary, and ideal architecture, as its species. The reciprocal relations of poetry and philosophy to each other; and of both to religion, and the moral sense.

XIV. March 13.—On the corruptions of the English language since the reign of Queen Anne in our style of writing prose. A few easy rules for the attainment of a manly, unaffected, and pure language, in our genuine mother tongue, whether for the purpose of writing, oratory, or conversation.

LECTURE I.[1]

General Character of the Gothic Mind in the Middle Ages.

MR. COLERIDGE began by treating of the races of mankind as descended from Shem, Ham, and Japheth, and therein of the early condition of man in his antique form. He then dwelt on the pre-eminence of the Greeks in Art and Philosophy, and noticed the suitableness of polytheism to small insulated states, in which patriotism acted as

[1] From Mr. Green's note taken at the delivery. *Ed.*

a substitute for religion, in destroying or suspending self. Afterwards, in consequence of the extension of the Roman empire, some universal or common spirit became necessary for the conservation of the vast body, and this common spirit was, in fact, produced in Christianity. The causes of the decline of the Roman empire were in operation long before the time of the actual overthrow; that overthrow had been foreseen by many eminent Romans, especially by Seneca. In fact, there was under the empire an Italian and a German party in Rome, and in the end the latter prevailed.

He then proceeded to describe the generic character of the Northern nations, and defined it as an independence of the whole in the freedom of the individual, noticing their respect for women, and their consequent chivalrous spirit in war; and how evidently the participation in the general council laid the foundation of the representative form of government, the only rational mode of preserving individual liberty in opposition to the licentious democracy of the ancient republics.

He called our attention to the peculiarity of their art, and showed how it entirely depended on a symbolical expression of the infinite,—which is not vastness, nor immensity, nor perfection, but whatever cannot be circumscribed within the limits of actual, sensuous being. In the ancient art, on the contrary, every thing was finite and material. Accordingly, sculpture was not attempted by the Gothic races till the ancient specimens were discovered, whilst painting and architecture were of native growth amongst them. In the earliest specimens of the paintings of modern ages, as in those of Giotto and his associates in the cemetery at Pisa, this complexity, variety, and symbolical character are evident, and are more fully developed in the mightier works of Michel Angelo and Raffael. The contemplation of the works of antique art excites a feeling of elevated beauty, and exalted notions of the human self; but the Gothic architecture impresses the beholder with a sense of self-annihilation; he becomes, as it were, a part of the work contemplated. An endless complexity and variety are united into one whole, the plan of which is not distinct from the execution. A Gothic cathedral is the petrefaction of our religion. The only work of truly modern sculpture is the Moses of Michel Angelo.

The Northern nations were prepared by their own previous religion for Christianity; they, for the most part received it gladly, and it took root as in a native soil. The deference to woman, characteristic of the Gothic races, combined itself with devotion in the idea of the Virgin Mother, and gave rise to many beautiful associations.[1]

Mr. C. remarked how Gothic an instrument in origin and character the organ was.

He also enlarged on the influence of female character on our education, the first impressions of our childhood being derived from women. Amongst oriental nations, he said, the only distinction was between lord and slave. With the antique Greeks, the will of every one conflicting with the will of all, produced licentiousness; with the modern descendants from the northern stocks, both these extremes were shut out, to reappear mixed and condensed into this principle or temper;—submission, but with free choice, illustrated in chivalrous devotion to women as such, in attachment to the sovereign, &c.

LECTURE II.[2]

General Character of the Gothic Literature and Art.

In my last lecture I stated that the descendants of Japhet and Shem peopled Europe and Asia, fulfilling in their distribution the prophecies of Scripture, while the descendants of Ham passed into Africa, there also actually verifying the interdiction pronounced against them. The Keltic and Teutonic nations occupied that part of Europe, which is now France, Britain, Germany, Sweden, Denmark, &c. They were in general a hardy race, possessing great fortitude, and capable of great endurance. The Romans slowly conquered the more southerly portion of their tribes, and succeeded only by their superior arts, their policy, and better discipline. After a time, when the Goths,—to use the name of the noblest and most historical

[1] The reader may compare the last two paragraphs with the first of Schlegel's Prelections on Dramatic Art and Literature—*Vol.* i. *pp* 10-16, and edit.—and with Schelling *Ueber das Verhältniss der bildenden Künste*, *p.* 377; though the resemblance in thought is but general

[2] From Mr. William Hammond's note taken at the delivery. *Ed.*

of the Teutonic tribes,—had acquired some knowledge of these arts from mixing with their conquerors, they invaded the Roman territories. The hardy habits, the steady perseverance, the better faith of the enduring Goth rendered him too formidable an enemy for the corrupt Roman, who was more inclined to purchase the subjection of his enemy, than to go through the suffering necessary to secure it. The conquest of the Romans gave to the Goths the Christian religion as it was then existing in Italy; and the light and graceful building of Grecian, or Roman-Greek order, became singularly combined with the massy architecture of the Goths, as wild and varied as the forest vegetation which it resembled. The Greek art is beautiful. When I enter a Greek Church, my eye is charmed, and my mind elated; I feel exalted, and proud that I am a man. But the Gothic art is sublime. On entering a cathedral, I am filled with devotion and with awe; I am lost to the actualities that surround me, and my whole being expands into the infinite; earth and air, nature and art, all swell up into eternity, and the only sensible impression left, is 'that I am nothing!' This religion, while it tended to soften the manners of the Northern tribes, was at the same time highly congenial to their nature. The Goths are free from the stain of hero worship. Gazing on their rugged mountains, surrounded by impassable forests, accustomed to gloomy seasons, they lived in the bosom of nature, and worshipped an invisible and unknown deity. Firm in his faith, domestic in his habits, the life of the Goth was simple and dignified, yet tender and affectionate.

The Greeks were remarkable for complacency and completion; they delighted in whatever pleased the eye; to them it was not enough to have merely the idea of a divinity, they must have it placed before them, shaped in the most perfect symmetry, and presented with the nicest judgment: and if we look upon any Greek production of art, the beauty of its parts, and the harmony of their union, the complete and complacent effect of the whole, are the striking characteristics. It is the same in their poetry. In Homer you have a poem perfect in its form, whether originally so, or from the labour of after critics, I know not; his descriptions are pictures brought vividly before you, and as far as the eye and understanding are concerned, I am indeed gratified. But if I wish my feelings

to be affected, if I wish my heart to be touched, if I wish to melt into sentiment and tenderness, I must turn to the heroic songs of the Goths, to the poetry of the middle ages. The worship of statues in Greece had, in a civil sense, its advantage, and disadvantage; advantage, in promoting statuary and the arts; disadvantage, in bringing their gods too much on a level with human beings, and thence depriving them of their dignity, and gradually giving rise to scepticism and ridicule. But no statue, no artificial emblem, could satisfy the Northman's mind; the dark wild imagery of nature which surrounded him, and the freedom of his life, gave his mind a tendency to the infinite, so that he found rest in that which presented no end, and derived satisfaction from that which was indistinct.

We have few and uncertain vestiges of Gothic literature till the time of Theodoric, who encouraged his subjects to write, and who made a collection of their poems. These consisted chiefly of heroic songs, sung at the Court; for at that time this was the custom. Charlemagne, in the beginning of the ninth century, greatly encouraged letters, and made a further collection of the poems of his time, among which were several epic poems of great merit; or rather in strictness there was a vast cycle of heroic poems, or minstrelsies, from and out of which separate poems were composed. The form of poetry was, however, for the most part, the metrical romance and heroic tale. Charlemagne's army, or a large division of it, was utterly destroyed in the Pyrenees, when returning from a successful attack on the Arabs of Navarre and Arragon; yet the name of Roncesvalles became famous in the songs of the Gothic poets. The Greeks and Romans would not have done this; they would not have recorded in heroic verse the death and defeat of their fellow-countrymen. But the Goths, firm in their faith, with a constancy not to be shaken, celebrated those brave men who died for their religion and their country! What, though they had been defeated, they died without fear, as they had lived without reproach; they left no stain on their names, for they fell fighting for their God, their liberty, and their rights; and the song that sang that day's reverse animated them to future victory and certain vengeance.

I must now turn to our great monarch, Alfred, one of the most august characters that any age has ever produced;

and when I picture him after the toils of government and the dangers of battle, seated by a solitary lamp, translating the holy scriptures into the Saxon tongue,—when I reflect on his moderation in success, on his fortitude and perseverance in difficulty and defeat, and on the wisdom and extensive nature of his legislation, I am really at a loss which part of this great man's character most to admire. Yet above all, I see the grandeur, the freedom, the mildness, the domestic unity, the universal character of the middle ages condensed into Alfred's glorious institution of the trial by jury. I gaze upon it as the immortal symbol of that age;—an age called indeed dark;—but how could that age be considered dark, which solved the difficult problem of universal liberty, freed man from the shackles of tyranny, and subjected his actions to the decision of twelve of his fellow-countrymen? The liberty of the Greeks was a phenomenon, a meteor, which blazed for a short time, and then sank into eternal darkness. It was a combination of most opposite materials, slavery and liberty. Such can neither be happy nor lasting. The Goths on the other hand said, You shall be our Emperor; but we must be Princes on our own estates, and over them you shall have no power! The Vassals said to their Prince, We will serve you in your wars, and defend your castle; but we must have liberty in our own circle, our cottage, our cattle, our proportion of land. The Cities said, We acknowledge you for our Emperor; but we must have our walls and our strong holds, and be governed by our own laws. Thus all combined, yet all were separate; all served, yet all were free. Such a government could not exist in a dark age. Our ancestors may not indeed have been deep in the metaphysics of the schools; they may not have shone in the fine arts; but much knowledge of human nature, much practical wisdom must have existed amongst them, when this admirable constitution was formed; and I believe it is a decided truth, though certainly an awful lesson, that nations are not the most happy at the time when literature and the arts flourish the most among them.

The translations I had promised in my syllabus I shall defer to the end of the course, when I shall give a single lecture of recitations illustrative of the different ages of poetry. There is one Northern tale I will relate, as it is one from which Shakspeare derived that strongly marked

and extraordinary scene between Richard III. and the Lady Anne. It may not be equal to that in strength and genius, but it is, undoubtedly, superior in decorum and delicacy.

A Knight had slain a Prince, the lord of a strong castle, in combat. He afterwards contrived to get into the castle, where he obtained an interveiw with the Princess's attendant, whose life he had saved in some encounter; he told her of his love for her mistress, and won her to his interest. She then slowly and gradually worked on her mistress's mind, spoke of the beauty of his person, the fire of his eyes, the sweetness of his voice, his valour in the field, his gentleness in the court; in short, by watching her opportunities, she at last filled the Princess's soul with this one image; she became restless; sleep forsook her; her curiosity to see this Knight became strong; but her maid still deferred the interview, till at length she confessed she was in love with him;—the Knight is then introduced, and the nuptials are quickly celebrated.

In this age there was a tendency in writers to the droll and the grotesque, and in the little dramas which at that time existed, there were singular instances of these. It was the disease of the age. It is a remarkable fact that Luther and Melancthon, the great religious reformers of that day, should have strongly recommended, for the education of children, dramas, which at present would be considered highly indecorous, if not bordering on a deeper sin. From one which they particularly recommended, I will give a few extracts; more I should not think it right to do. The play opens with Adam and Eve washing and dressing their children to appear before the Lord, who is coming from heaven to hear them repeat the Lord's Prayer, Belief, &c. In the next scene the Lord appears seated like a schoolmaster, with the children standing round, when Cain, who is behindhand, and a sad pickle, comes running in with a bloody nose and his hat on. Adam says, "What, with your hat on!" Cain then goes up to shake hands with the Almighty, when Adam says (giving him a cuff), "Ah, would you give your left hand to the Lord?" At length Cain takes his place in the class, and it becomes his turn to say the Lord's Prayer. At this time the Devil (a constant attendant at that time) makes his appearance, and getting behind Cain, whispers

in his ear; instead of the Lord's Prayer, Cain gives it so changed by the transposition of the words, that the meaning is reversed; yet this is so artfully done by the author, that it is exactly as an obstinate child would answer, who knows his lesson, yet does not choose to say it. In the last scene, horses in rich trappings and carriages covered with gold are introduced, and the good children are to ride in them and be Lord Mayors, Lords, &c.; Cain and the bad ones are to be made cobblers and tinkers, and only to associate with such.

This, with numberless others, was written by Hans Sachs. Our simple ancestors, firm in their faith, and pure in their morals, were only amused by these pleasantries, as they seemed to them, and neither they nor the reformers feared their having any influence hostile to religion. When I was many years back in the north of Germany, there were several innocent superstitions in practice. Among others at Christmas, presents used to be given to the children by the parents, and they were delivered on Christmas day by a person who personated, and was supposed by the children to be, Christ: early on Christmas morning he called, knocking loudly at the door, and (having received his instructions) left presents for the good and a rod for the bad. Those who have since been in Germany have found this custom relinquished; it was considered profane and irrational. Yet they have not found the children better, nor the mothers more careful of their offspring; they have not found their devotion more fervent, their faith more strong, nor their morality more pure.[1]

LECTURE III.

The Troubadours—Boccaccio—Petrarch—Pulci—Chaucer—Spenser.

THE last Lecture was allotted to an investigation into the origin and character of a species of poetry, the least influenced of any by the literature of Greece and Rome,—that in which the portion contributed by the Gothic conquerors,

[1] See this custom of Knecht Rupert more minutely described in Mr. Coleridge's own letter from Germany, published in the 2nd vol. of the Friend, p. 320. *Ed.*

the predilections and general tone or habit of thought and feeling, brought by our remote ancestors with them from the forests of Germany, or the deep dells and rocky mountains of Norway, are the most prominent. In the present Lecture I must introduce you to a species of poetry, which had its birth-place near the centre of Roman glory, and in which, as might be anticipated, the influences of the Greek and Roman muse are far more conspicuous,—as, great, indeed, as the efforts of intentional imitation on the part of the poets themselves could render them. But happily for us and for their own fame, the intention of the writers as men is often at complete variance with the genius of the same men as poets. To the force of their intention we owe their mythological ornaments, and the greater definiteness of their imagery; and their passion for the beautiful, the voluptuous, and the artificial, we must in part attribute to the same intention, but in part likewise to their natural dispositions and tastes. For the same climate and many of the same circumstances were acting on them, which had acted on the great classics, whom they were endeavouring to imitate. But the love of the marvellous, the deeper sensibility, the higher reverence for womanhood, the characteristic spirit of sentiment and courtesy,—these were the heir-looms of nature, which still regained the ascendant, whenever the use of the living mother-language enabled the inspired poet to appear instead of the toilsome scholar.

From this same union, in which the soul (if I may dare so express myself) was Gothic, while the outward forms and a majority of the words themselves, were the reliques of the Roman, arose the Romance, or romantic language, in which the Troubadours or Love-singers of Provence sang and wrote, and the different dialects of which have been modified into the modern Italian, Spanish, and Portuguese; while the language of the Trouveurs, Trouveres, or Norman-French poets, forms the intermediate link between the Romance or modified Roman, and the Teutonic, including the Dutch, Danish, Swedish, and the upper and lower German, as being the modified Gothic. And as the northernmost extreme of the Norman-French, or that part of the link in which it formed on the Teutonic, we must take the Norman-English minstrels and metrical romances, from the greater predominance of the Anglo-

Saxon Gothic in the derivation of the words. I mean, that the language of the English metrical romance is less romanized, and has fewer words, not originally of a northern origin, than the same romances in the Norman-French; which is the more striking, because the former were for the most part translated from the latter; the authors of which seem to have eminently merited their name of Trouveres, or inventors. Thus then we have a chain with two rings or staples:—at the southern end there is the Roman, or Latin; at the northern end the Keltic, Teutonic, or Gothic; and the links beginning with the southern end, are the Romance, including the Provençal, the Italian, Spanish, and Portuguese, with their different dialects, then the Norman-French, and lastly the English.

My object in adverting to the Italian poets, is not so much for their own sakes, in which point of view Dante and Ariosto alone would have required separate Lectures, but for the elucidation of the merits of our countrymen, as to what extent we must consider them as fortunate imitators of their Italian predecessors, and in what points they have the higher claims of original genius. Of Dante, I am to speak elsewhere. Of Boccaccio, who has little interest as a metrical poet in any respect, and none for my present purpose, except, perhaps, as the reputed inventor or introducer of the octave stanza in his Teseide, it will be sufficient to say, that we owe to him the subjects of numerous poems taken from his famous tales, the happy art of narration, and the still greater merit of a depth and fineness in the workings of the passions, in which last excellence, as likewise in the wild and imaginative character of the situations, his almost neglected romances appear to me greatly to excel his far famed Decameron. To him, too, we owe the more doubtful merit of having introduced into the Italian prose, and by the authority of his name and the influence of his example, more or less throughout Europe, the long interwoven periods, and architectural structure which arose from the very nature of their language in the Greek writers, but which already in the Latin orators and historians, had betrayed a species of effort, a foreign something, which had been superinduced on the language, instead of growing out of it; and which was far too alien from that individualizing and confederating, yet not blending, character of the North, to become

permanent, although its magnificence and stateliness were objects of admiration and occasional imitation. This style diminished the control of the writer over the inner feelings of men, and created too great a chasm between the body and the life; and hence especially it was abandoned by Luther.

But lastly, to Boccaccio's sanction we must trace a large portion of the mythological pedantry and incongruous paganisms, which for so long a period deformed the poetry, even of the truest poets. To such an extravagance did Boccaccio himself carry this folly, that in a romance of chivalry he has uniformly styled God the Father Jupiter, our Saviour Apollo, and the Evil Being Pluto. But for this there might be some excuse pleaded. I dare make none for the gross and disgusting licentiousness, the daring profaneness, which rendered the Decameron of Boccaccio the parent of a hundred worse children, fit to be classed among the enemies of the human race; which poisons Ariosto—(for that I may not speak oftener than necessary of so odious a subject, I mention it here once for all)—which interposes a painful mixture in the humour of Chaucer, and which has once or twice seduced even our pure-minded Spenser into a grossness, as heterogeneous from the spirit of his great poem, as it was alien to the delicacy of his morals.

PETRARCH.

Born at Arezzo, 1304.—Died 1374.

Petrarch was the final blossom and perfection of the Troubadours. See Biog. Lit. vol. ii. p. 27, &c.

NOTES ON PETRARCH'S[1] SONNETS, CANZONES, &c.

VOL. I.

Good.

SONNET. 1. Voi, ch' ascoltate, &c.
7. La gola, e 'l sonno, &c.
11. Se la mia vita, &c.
12. Quando fra l'altre, &c.

[1] These notes, by Mr. C., are written in a Petrarch in my possession, and are of some date before 1812. It is hoped that they will not seem ill placed here. *Ed.*

18. Vergognando talor, &c.
25. Quanto più m' avvicino, &c.
28. Solo e pensoso, &c.
29. S' io credessi, &c.

CANZ. 14. Sì è debile il filo, &c.

Pleasing.

BALL. 1. Lassare il velo, &c.
CANZ. 1. Nel dolce tempo, &c.

This poem was imitated by our old Herbert;[1] it is ridiculous in the thoughts, but simple and sweet in diction.

Dignified.

CANZ. 2. O aspettata in ciel, &c.
9. Gentil mia Donna, &c.

The first half of this ninth canzone is exquisite; and in canzone 8, the nine lines beginning

O poggi, o valli, &c.

to *cura*, are expressed with vigour and chastity.

CANZ. 9. Daquel dì innanzi a me medesmo piacqui,
Empiendo d'un pensier' alto e soave
Quel core, *ond' hanno i begli occhi la chiave*.

Note. O that the Pope would take these eternal keys, which so for ever turn the bolts on the finest passages of true passion!

VOL. II.

CANZ. 1. Che debb' io far? &c.

Very good; but not equal, I think, to Canzone 2,

Amor, se vuoi ch' i' torni, &c.

though less faulty. With the omission of half-a-dozen conceits and Petrarchisms of *hooks*, *baits*, *flames*, and *torches*, this second canzone is a bold and impassioned lyric, and leaves no doubt in my mind of Petrarch's having possessed a true poetic genius. *Utinam deleri possint sequentia*:—

L. 17—19. ——— e la soave fiamma
Ch' ancor, lasso! m' infiamma
Essendo spenta, or che fea dunque ardendo?

[1] If George Herbert is meant, I can find nothing like an imitation of this canzone in his poems. *Ed.*

L. 54—56. ——— ov' erano a tutt' ore
Disposti gli ami ov' io fui preso, e l' esca
Ch' i' bramo sempre.

L. 76—79. ——— onde l' accese
Saette uscivan d' invisibil foco,
E ragion temean poco ;
Chè contra 'l ciel non val difesa umana.

And the lines 86, 87.
Poser' in dubbio, a cui
Devesse il pregio di più laude darsi—

are rather flatly worded.

LUIGI PULCI.

Born at Florence, 1431.—Died about 1487.

Pulci was of one of the noblest families in Florence, reported to be one of the Frankish stocks which remained in that city after the departure of Charlemagne :—

Pulcia Gallorum soboles descendit in urbem,
Clara quidem bello, sacris nec inhospita Musis.
Vermo de illustrat. Cort. Flor. III. v. 118.

Members of this family were five times elected to the Priorate, one of the highest honours of the republic. Pulci had two brothers, and one of their wives, Antonia, who were all poets :—

Carminibus patriis notissima Pulcia proles ;
Quis non hanc urbem Musarum dicat amicam,
Si tres producat fratres domus una poetas ?
Ib. II. v. 241.

Luigi married Lucrezia di Uberto, of the Albizzi family, and was intimate with the great men of his time, but more especially with Angelo Politian, and Lorenzo the Magnificent. His Morgante has been attributed, in part at least,[1] to the assistance of Marsilius Ficinus, and by others the whole has been attributed to Politian. The first conjecture is utterly improbable ; the last is possible, indeed, on account of the licentiousness of the poem ; but there are no direct grounds for believing it. The Morgante Maggiore is the first proper romance ; although, perhaps, Pulci had the Teseide before him. The story is taken from the fabulous history of Turpin ; and if the author had any

[1] Meaning the 25th canto. *Ed.*

distinct object, it seems to have been that of making himself merry with the absurdities of the old romancers. The Morgante sometimes makes you think of Rabelais. It contains the most remarkable guess or allusion upon the subject of America that can be found in any book published before the discovery.[1] The well known passage in the tragic Seneca is not to be compared with it. The *copia verborum* of the mother Florentine tongue, and the easiness of his style, afterwards brought to perfection by Berni, are the chief merits of Pulci; his chief demerit is his heartless spirit of jest and buffoonery, by which sovereigns and their courtiers were flattered by the degradation of nature, and the *impossibilification* of a pretended virtue.

[1] The reference is, of course, to the following stanzas:—

Disse Astarotte: un error lungo e fioco
Per molti secol non ben conosciuto,
Fa che si dice d' Ercol le colonne,
E che più là molti periti sonne.

Sappi che questa opinione è vana;
Perchè più oltre navicar si puote,
Però che l' acqua in ogni parte è piana,
Benche la terra abbi forma di ruote:
Era più grossa allor la gente humana;
Talche potrebbe arrossirne le gote
Ercule ancor d' aver posti que' segni,
Perchè più oltre passeranno i legni.

E puossi andar giù ne l' altro emisperio,
Però che al centro ogni cosa reprime;
Si che la terra per divin misterio
Sospesa sta fra le stelle sublime,
E là giù son città, castella, e imperio;
Ma nol cognobbon quelle genti prime:
Vedi che il sol di camminar s' affretta,
Dove io ti dico che là giù s' aspetta.

E come un segno surge in Oriente,
Un altro cade con mirabil arte,
Come si vede qua ne l' Occidente,
Però che il ciel giustamente comparte;
Antipodi appellata è quella gente;
Adora il sole e Jupiterre e Marte,
E piante e animal come voi hanno,
E spesso insieme gran battaglie fanno.

C. XXV. st. 228, &c.

The Morgante was printed in 1488. *Ed.* Another very curious anticipation, said to have been first noticed by Amerigo Vespucci, occurs in Dante's *Purgatorio:*

I mi volsi a man destra e posi mente
All 'altro polo: e vidi quattro stelle
Non viste mai, fuor ch' alla prima gente.

C. L. I. 22-4.

CHAUCER.

Born in London, 1328.—Died 1400.[1]

Chaucer must be read with an eye to the Norman-French Trouveres, of whom he is the best representative in English. He had great powers of invention. As in Shakspeare, his characters represent classes, but in a different manner; Shakspeare's characters are the representatives of the interior nature of humanity, in which some element has become so predominant as to destroy the health of the mind; whereas Chaucer's are rather representatives of classes of manners. He is therefore more led to individualize in a mere personal sense. Observe Chaucer's love of nature; and how happily the subject of his main work is chosen. When you reflect that the company in the Decameron have retired to a place of safety, from the raging of a pestilence, their mirth provokes a sense of their unfeelingness; whereas in Chaucer nothing of this sort occurs, and the scheme of a party on a pilgrimage, with different ends and occupations, aptly allows of the greatest variety of expression in the tales.

SPENSER.

Born in London, 1553.—Died 1599.

There is this difference, among many others, between Shakspeare and Spenser:—Shakspeare is never coloured by the customs of his age; what appears of contemporary character in him is merely negative; it is just not something else. He has none of the fictitious realities of the classics, none of the grotesquenesses of chivalry, none of the allegory of the middle ages; there is no sectarianism either of politics or religion, no miser, no witch,—no common witch,—no astrology—nothing impermanent of however long duration; but he stands like the yew tree in Lorton vale, which has known so many ages that it belongs to none in particular; a living image of endless self-reproduction, like the immortal tree of Malabar. In Spenser the spirit of

[1] From Mr. Green's note. *Ed.*

chivalry is entirely predominant, although with a much greater infusion of the poet's own individual self into it than is found in any other writer. He has the wit of the southern with the deeper inwardness of the northern genius.

No one can appreciate Spenser without some reflection on the nature of allegorical writing. The mere etymological meaning of the word, allegory,—to talk of one thing and thereby convey another,—is too wide. The true sense is this,—the employment of one set of agents and images to convey in disguise a moral meaning, with a likeness to the imagination, but with a difference to the understanding,—those agents and images being so combined as to form a homogeneous whole. This distinguishes it from metaphor, which is part of an allegory. But allegory is not properly distinguishable from fable, otherwise than as the first includes the second, as a genus its species; for in a fable there must be nothing but what is universally known and acknowledged, but in an allegory there may be that which is new and not previously admitted. The pictures of the great masters, especially of the Italian schools, are genuine allegories. Amongst the classics, the multitude of their gods either precluded allegory altogether, or else made every thing allegory, as in the Hesiodic Theogonia, for you can scarcely distinguish between power and the personification of power. The Cupid and Psyche of, or found in, Apuleius, is a phænomenon. It is the Platonic mode of accounting for the fall of man. The Battle of the Soul [1] by Prudentius is an early instance of Christian allegory.

Narrative allegory is distinguished from mythology as reality from symbol; it is, in short, the proper intermedium between person and personification. Where it is too strongly individualized, it ceases to be allegory; this is often felt in the Pilgrim's Progress, where the characters are real persons with nicknames. Perhaps one of the most curious warnings against another attempt at narrative allegory on a great scale, may be found in Tasso's account of what he himself intended in and by his Jerusalem Delivered.

As characteristic of Spenser, I would call your particular attention in the first place to the indescribable sweetness and fluent projection of his verse, very clearly distinguishable from the deeper and more inwoven harmonies of

[1] Psychomachia. *Ed.*

Shakspeare and Milton. This stanza is a good instance of what I mean :—

> Yet she, most faithfull ladie, all this while
> Forsaken, wofull, solitarie mayd,
> Far from all peoples preace, as in exile,
> In wildernesse and wastfull deserts strayd
> To seeke her knight; who, subtily betrayd
> Through that late vision which th' enchaunter wrought,
> Had her abandond; she, of nought affrayd,
> Through woods and wastnes wide him daily sought,
> Yet wished tydinges none of him unto her brought.
>
> F. Qu. B. I. c. 3. st. 3.

2. Combined with this sweetness and fluency, the scientific construction of the metre of the Faery Queene is very noticeable. One of Spenser's arts is that of alliteration, and he uses it with great effect in doubling the impression of an image :—

> In *w*ildernesse and *w*astful deserts,—
> Through *w*oods and *w*astnes *w*ilde,—
> They passe the bitter waves of Acheron,
> Where many soules sit *w*ailing *w*oefully,
> And come to *fi*ery *fl*ood of *Ph*legeton,
> Whereas the damned ghosts in torments fly,
> And with *s*harp *s*hrilling *s*hrieks doth bootlesse cry,—&c.

He is particularly given to an alternate alliteration, which is, perhaps, when well used, a great secret in melody :—

> A *r*amping lyon *r*ushed suddenly,—
> And *s*ad to *s*ee her *s*orrowful constraint,—
> And on the grasse her *d*aintie *l*imbes *d*id *l*ay,—&c.

You cannot read a page of the Faery Queene, if you read for that purpose without perceiving the intentional alliterativeness of the words; and yet so skilfully is this managed, that it never strikes any unwarned ear as artificial, or other than the result of the necessary movement of the verse.

3. Spenser displays great skill in harmonizing his descriptions of external nature and actual incidents with the allegorical character and epic activity of the poem. Take these two beautiful passages as illustrations of what I mean :—

> By this the northerne wagoner had set
> His sevenfol teme behind the stedfast starre
> That was in ocean waves yet never wet,
> But firme is fixt, and sendeth light from farre

To all that in the wide deepe wandring arre ;
And chearefull chaunticlere with his note shrill
Had warned once, that Phœbus' fiery carre
In hast was climbing up the easterne hill,
Full envious that Night so long his roome did fill ;

When those accursed messengers of hell,
That feigning dreame, and that faire-forged spright
Came, &c. B. I. c. 2. st. 1.

* * *

At last, the golden orientall gate
Of greatest Heaven gan to open fayre ;
And Phœbus, fresh as brydegrome to his mate,
Came dauncing forth, shaking his deawie hayre ;
And hurld his glistring beams through gloomy ayre.
Which when the wakeful Elfe perceiv'd, streightway
He started up, and did him selfe prepayre
In sunbright armes and battailons array ;
For with that Pagan proud he combat will that day.
Ib. c. 5. st. 2.

Observe also the exceeding vividness of Spenser's descriptions. They are not, in the true sense of the word, picturesque ; but are composed of a wondrous series of images, as in our dreams. Compare the following passage with any thing you may remember *in pari materia* in Milton or Shakspeare : —

His haughtie helmet, horrid all with gold,
Both glorious brightnesse and great terrour bredd ;
For all the crest a dragon did enfold
With greedie pawes, and over all did spredd
His golden winges ; his dreadfull hideous hedd,
Close couched on the bever, seemd to throw
From flaming mouth bright sparkles fiery redd,
That suddeine horrour to faint hartes did show ;
And scaly tayle was stretcht adowne his back full low.

Upon the top of all his loftie crest
A bounch of haires discolourd diversly,
With sprinkled pearle and gold full richly drest,
Did shake, and seemd to daunce for jollitie ;
Like to an almond tree ymounted hye
On top of greene Selinis all alone,
With blossoms brave bedecked daintily,
Whose tender locks do tremble every one
At everie little breath that under heaven is blowne.
Ib. c. 7. st. 31-2.

4. You will take especial note of the marvellous independence and true imaginative absence of all particular space or time in the Faery Queene. It is in the domains neither of history or geography : it is ignorant of all artificial boundary, all material obstacles ; it is truly in land of

Faery, that is, of mental space. The poet has placed you in a dream, a charmed sleep, and you neither wish, nor have the power, to inquire where you are, or how you got there. It reminds me of some lines of my own :—

> Oh ! would to Alla !
> The raven or the sea-mew were appointed
> To bring me food !—or rather that my soul
> Might draw in life from the universal air !
> It were a lot divine in some small skift
> Along some ocean's boundless solitude
> To float for ever with a careless course
> And think myself the only being alive !
>
> *Remorse*, Act iv. sc. 3.

Indeed Spenser himself, in the conduct of his great poem, may be represented under the same image, his symbolizing purpose being his mariner's compass :—

> As pilot well expert in perilous wave,
> That to a stedfast starre his course hath bent,
> When foggy mistes or cloudy tempests have
> The faithfull light of that faire lampe yblent,
> And coverd Heaven with hideous dreriment ;
> Upon his card and compas firmes his eye,
> The maysters of his long experiment,
> And to them does the steddy helme apply,
> Bidding his winged vessell fairely forward fly.
>
> B. II. c. 7. st. 1.

So the poet through the realms of allegory.

5. You should note the quintessential character of Christian chivalry in all his characters, but more especially in his women. The Greeks, except, perhaps, in Homer, seem to have had no way of making their women interesting, but by unsexing them, as in the instances of the tragic Medea, Electra, &c. Contrast such characters with Spenser's Una, who exhibits no prominent feature, has no particularization, but produces the same feeling that a statue does, when contemplated at a distance :—

> From her fayre head her fillet she undight,
> And layd her stole aside : her angels face,
> As the great eye of Heaven, shyned bright,
> And made a sunshine in the shady place ;
> Did never mortal eye behold such heavenly grace.
>
> B. I. c. 3. st. 4.

6. In Spenser we see the brightest and purest form of that nationality which was so common a characteristic of

our elder poets. There is nothing unamiable, nothing contemptuous of others, in it. To glorify their country—to elevate England into a queen, an empress of the heart—this was their passion and object; and how dear and important an object it was or may be, let Spain, in the recollection of her Cid, declare! There is a great magic in national names. What a damper to all interest is a list of native East Indian merchants! Unknown names are non-conductors; they stop all sympathy. No one of our poets has touched this string more exquisitely than Spenser; especially in his chronicle of the British Kings (B. II. c. 10), and the marriage of the Thames with the Medway (B. IV. c. 11), in both which passages the mere names constitute half the pleasure we receive. To the same feeling we must in particular attribute Spenser's sweet reference to Ireland:—

> Ne thence the Irishe rivers absent were;
> Sith no lesse famous than the rest they be, &c. Ib.
>
> * * * *
>
> And Mulla mine, whose waves I whilom taught to weep.
> Ib.

And there is a beautiful passage of the same sort in the Colin Clout's Come Home Again:—

> "One day," quoth he, "I sat, as was my trade,
> Under the foot of Mole," &c.

Lastly, the great and prevailing character of Spenser's mind is fancy under the conditions of imagination, as an ever present but not always active power. He has an imaginative fancy, but he has not imagination, in kind or degree, as Shakspeare and Milton have; the boldest effort of his powers in this way is the character of Talus.[1] Add to this a feminine tenderness and almost maidenly purity of feeling, and above all, a deep moral earnestness which produces a believing sympathy and acquiescence in the reader, and you have a tolerably adequate view of Spenser's intellectual being.

[1] B 5. Legend of Artegall. *Ed.*

LECTURE VII.

Ben Jonson, Beaumont and Fletcher, and Massinger.

A CONTEMPORARY is rather an ambiguous term, when applied to authors. It may simply mean that one man lived and wrote while another was yet alive, however deeply the former may have been indebted to the latter as his model. There have been instances in the literary world that might remind a botanist of a singular sort of parasite plant, which rises above ground, independent and unsupported, an apparent original; but trace its roots, and you will find the fibres all terminating in the root of another plant at an unsuspected distance, which, perhaps, from want of sun and genial soil, and the loss of sap, has scarcely been able to peep above the ground.—Or the word may mean those whose compositions were contemporaneous in such a sense as to preclude all likelihood of the one having borrowed from the other. In the latter sense I should call Ben Jonson a contemporary of Shakspeare, though he long survived him; while I should prefer the phrase of immediate successors for Beaumont and Fletcher, and Massinger, though they too were Shakspeare's contemporaries in the former sense.

BEN JONSON.[1]

Born, 1574.—Died, 1637.

Ben Jonson is original; he is, indeed, the only one of the great dramatists of that day who was not either directly produced, or very greatly modified, by Shakspeare. In truth, he differs from our great master in every thing—in form and in substance—and betrays no tokens of his proximity. He is not original in the same way as Shakspeare is original; but after a fashion of his own, Ben Jonson is most truly original.

The characters in his plays are, in the strictest sense of the term, abstractions. Some very prominent feature is

[1] From Mr. Green's note. *Ed.*

taken from the whole man, and that single feature or humour is made the basis upon which the entire character is built up. Ben Jonson's *dramatis personæ* are almost as fixed as the masks of the ancient actors; you know from the first scene—sometimes from the list of names—exactly what every one of them is to be. He was a very accurately observing man; but he cared only to observe what was external or open to, and likely to impress, the senses. He individualizes, not so much, if at all, by the exhibition of moral or intellectual differences, as by the varieties and contrasts of manners, modes of speech and tricks of temper; as in such characters as Puntarvolo, Bobadill, &c.

I believe there is not one whim or affectation in common life noted in any memoir of that age which may not be found drawn and framed in some corner or other of Ben Jonson's dramas; and they have this merit, in common with Hogarth's prints, that not a single circumstance is introduced in them which does not play upon, and help to bring out, the dominant humour or humours of the piece. Indeed I ought very particularly to call your attention to the extraordinary skill shown by Ben Jonson in contriving situations for the display of his characters.[1] In fact, his care and anxiety in this matter led him to do what scarcely any of the dramatists of that age did—that is, invent his plots. It is not a first perusal that suffices for the full perception of the elaborate artifice of the plots of the Alchemist and the Silent Woman;—that of the former is absolute perfection for a necessary entanglement, and an unexpected, yet natural, evolution.

Ben Jonson exhibits a sterling English diction, and he has with great skill contrived varieties of construction; but his style is rarely sweet or harmonious, in consequence of his labour at point and strength being so evident. In all his works, in verse or prose, there is an extraordinary opulence of thought; but it is the produce of an amassing power in the author, and not of a growth from within. Indeed a large proportion of Ben Jonson's thoughts may be traced to classic or obscure modern writers, by those who are learned and curious enough to follow the steps of this robust, surly, and observing dramatist.

[1] "In Jonson's comic inventions," says Schlegel, "a spirit of observation is manifested more than fancy." Vol. 4, p. 93.

BEAUMONT. Born, 1586.[1]—Died, 1615-16.

FLETCHER. Born, 1579.—Died, 1625.

Mr. Weber, to whose taste, industry, and appropriate erudition, we owe, I will not say the best, (for that would be saying little,) but a good, edition of Beaumont and Fletcher, has complimented the Philaster, which he himself describes as inferior to the Maid's Tragedy by the same writers, as but little below the noblest of Shakspeare's plays, Lear, Macbeth, Othello, &c. and consequently implying the equality, at least, of the Maid's Tragedy;—and an eminent living critic,—who in the manly wit, strong sterling sense, and robust style of his original works, had presented the best possible credentials of office, as *chargé d'affaires* of literature in general,—and who by his edition of Massinger—a work in which there was more for an editor to do, and in which more was actually well done, than in any similar work within my knowledge—has proved an especial right of authority in the appreciation of dramatic poetry, and hath potentially a double voice with the public in his own right and in that of the critical synod, where, as *princeps senatus*, he possesses it by his prerogative,—has affirmed that Shakspeare's superiority to his contemporaries rests on his superior wit alone, while in all the other and, as I should deem, higher excellencies of the drama, character, pathos, depth of thought, &c. he is equalled by Beaumont and Fletcher, Ben Jonson, and Massinger![2]

Of wit I am engaged to treat in another Lecture. It is a genus of many species; and at present I shall only say, that the species which is predominant in Shakspeare, is so completely Shakspearian, and in its essence so interwoven with all his other characteristic excellencies, that I am equally incapable of comprehending, both how it can be detached from his other powers, and how, being disparate in kind from the wit of contemporary dramatists, it can be compared with theirs in degree. And again—the

[1] Mr. Dyce thinks that "Beaumont's birth ought to be fixed at a somewhat earlier date," because, in the Funeral Certificate on the decease of his father, dated 22nd April, 1598, he is said to be *of the age of thirteen years or more*; and because "at the age of twelve, 4th February, 1596-7," according to Wood's Ath. Oxon, "he was admitted a gentleman-commoner of Broadgates Hall."

[2] See Mr. Gifford's introduction to his edition of Massinger. *Ed.*

detachment and the practicability of the comparison being granted—I should, I confess, be rather inclined to concede the contrary;—and in the most common species of wit, and in the ordinary application of the term, to yield this particular palm to Beaumont and Fletcher, whom here and hereafter I take as one poet with two names,—leaving undivided what a rare love and still rarer congeniality have united. At least, I have never been able to distinguish the presence of Fletcher during the life of Beaumont, nor the absence of Beaumont during the survival of Fletcher.

But waiving, or rather deferring this question, I protest against the remainder of the position *in toto*. And indeed, whilst I can never, I trust, show myself blind to the various merits of Jonson, Beaumont and Fletcher, and Massinger, or insensible to the greatness of the merits which they possess in common, or to the specific excellencies which give to each of the three a worth of his own,—I confess, that one main object of this Lecture was to prove that Shakspeare's eminence is his own, and not that of his age; that as the pine-apple, the melon, and the gourd may grow on the same bed;—yea, the same circumstances of warmth may be necessary to their full development, yet account for the golden hue, the ambrosial flavour, the perfect shape of the pine-apple, or the tufted wreath on its head. Would that those, who seek to twist sand-ropes, would but promise us in this instance to make it the rope of an equal successor!

What had a grammatical and logical consistency for the ear, what could be put together and represented to the eye—these poets took from the ear and eye, unchecked by any intuition of an inward impossibility;—just as a man might put together a quarter of an orange, a quarter of an apple, and the like of a lemon and a pomegranate, and made it look like one round diverse-coloured fruit. But nature, which works from within by evolution and assimilation according to a law, cannot do so, nor could Shakspeare; for he too worked in the spirit of nature, by evolving the germ from within by the imaginative power according to an idea. For as the power of seeing is to light, so is an idea in mind to a law in nature. They are correlatives, which suppose each other.

The plays of Beaumont and Fletcher are mere aggrega-

tions without unity; in the Shakspearian drama there is a vitality which grows and evolves itself from within,—a key-note which guides and controls the harmonies throughout. What is Lear?—It is storm and tempest—the thunder at first grumbling in the far horizon, then gathering around us, and at length bursting in fury over our heads,—succeeded by a breaking of the clouds for a while, a last flash of lightning, the closing in of night, and the single hope of darkness! And Romeo and Juliet?—It is a spring day, gusty and beautiful in the morn, and closing like an April evening with the song of the nightingale;[1] —whilst Macbeth is deep and earthy,—composed to the subterranean music of a troubled conscience, which converts every thing into the wild and fearful!

Doubtless from mere observation, or from the occasional similarity of the writer's own character, more or less in Beaumont and Fletcher, and other such writers, will happen to be in correspondence with nature, and still more in apparent compatibility with it. But yet the false source is always discoverable, first by the gross contradictions to nature in so many other parts, and secondly, by the want of the impression which Shakspeare makes, that the thing said not only might have been said, but that nothing else could be substituted, so as to excite the same sense of its exquisite propriety. I have always thought the conduct and expressions of Othello and Iago in the last scene, when Iago is brought in prisoner, a wonderful instance of Shakspeare's consummate judgment -

Oth. I look down towards his feet;—but that's a fable.
If that thou be'st a devil, I cannot kill thee.
Iago. I bleed, Sir; but not kill'd.
Oth. I am not sorry neither.

Think what a volley of execrations and defiances Beaumont and Fletcher would have poured forth here!

Indeed Massinger and Ben Jonson are both more perfect in their kind than Beaumont and Fletcher; the former in the story and affecting incidents; the latter in the exhibition of manners and peculiarities, whims in language, and vanities of appearance.

There is, however, a diversity of the most dangerous

[1] Was der Duft eines südlichen Frühlings berauschendes, der Gesang der Nachtigall sehnsüchtiges, das erste Aufblühung der Rose wollüstiges hat, das athmet aus diesem Gedicht. Schlegel's *Dram. Vorlesungen*, Vol. iii. p 107.

kind here. Shakspeare shaped his characters out of the nature within; but we cannot so safely say, out of his own nature as an individual person. No! this latter is itself but a *natura naturata*,—an effect, a product, not a power. It was Shakspeare's prerogative to have the universal, which is potentially in each particular, opened out to him, the *homo generalis*, not as an abstraction from observation of a variety of men, but as the substance capable of endless modifications, of which his own personal existence was but one, and to use this one as the eye that beheld the other, and as the tongue that could convey the discovery. There is no greater or more common vice in dramatic writers than to draw out of themselves. How I—alone and in the self sufficiency of my study, as all men are apt to be proud in their dreams—should like to be talking *king!* Shakspeare, in composing, had no *I*, but the *I* representative. In Beaumont and Fletcher you have descriptions of characters by the poet rather than the characters themselves: we are told, and impressively told, of their being; but we rarely or never feel that they actually are.

Beaumont and Fletcher are the most lyrical of our dramatists. I think their comedies the best part of their works, although there are scenes of very deep tragic interest in some of their plays. I particularly recommend Monsieur Thomas for good pure comic humour.

There is, occasionally, considerable license in their dramas; and this opens a subject much needing vindication and sound exposition, but which is beset with such difficulties for a Lecturer, that I must pass it by. Only as far as Shakspeare is concerned, I own, I can with less pain admit a fault in him than beg an excuse for it. I will not, therefore, attempt to palliate the grossness that actually exists in his plays by the customs of his age, or by the far greater coarseness of all his contemporaries, excepting Spenser, who is himself not wholly blameless, though nearly so;—for I place Shakspeare's merit on being of no age. But I would clear away what is, in my judgment, not his, as that scene of the Porter [1] in Macbeth, and many other such passages, and abstract what is coarse in manners only, and all that which from the frequency of our own vices, we associate with his words. If this were truly done, little that could be justly reprehensible would remain.

[1] Act ii. sc. 3.

Compare the vile comments, offensive and defensive, on Pope's

Lust thro' some gentle strainers, &c.

with the worst thing in Shakspeare, or even in Beaumont and Fletcher; and then consider how unfair the attack is on our old dramatists; especially because it is an attack that cannot be properly answered in that presence in which an answer would be most desirable, from the painful nature of one part of the position; but this very pain is almost a demonstration of its falsehood!

MASSINGER.

Born at Salisbury, 1584.—Died, 1640.

With regard to Massinger, observe,

1. The vein of satire on the times; but this is not as in Shakspeare, where the natures evolve themselves according to their incidental disproportions, from excess, deficiency, or mislocation, of one or more of the component elements; but is merely satire on what is attributed to them by others

2. His excellent metre—a better model for dramatists in general to imitate than Shakspeare's,—even if a dramatic taste existed in the frequenters of the stage, and could be gratified in the present size and management, or rather mismanagement, of the two patent theatres. I do not mean that Massinger's verse is superior to Shakspeare's or equal to it. Far from it; but it is much more easily constructed, and may be more successfully adopted by writers in the present day. It is the nearest approach to the language of real life at all compatible with a fixed metre. In Massinger, as in all our poets before Dryden, in order to make harmonious verse in the reading, it is absolutely necessary that the meaning should be understood;—when the meaning is once seen, then the harmony is perfect. Whereas in Pope, and in most of the writers who followed in his school, it is the mechanical metre which determines the sense.

3. The impropriety, and indecorum of demeanour in his favourite characters, as in Bertoldo in the Maid of Honour,

who is a swaggerer, talking to his sovereign what no sovereign could endure, and to gentlemen what no gentlemen would answer without pulling his nose.

4. Shakspeare's Ague-cheek, Osric, &c. are displayed through others, in the course of social intercourse, by the mode of their performing some office in which they are employed; but Massinger's *Sylli* come forward to declare themselves fools *ab arbitrium auctoris*, and so the diction always needs the *subintelligitur* ('the man looks as if he thought so and so,') expressed in the language of the satirist, and not in that of the man himself:—

> *Sylli.* You may, madam,
> Perhaps, believe that I in this use art
> To make you dote upon me, by exposing
> My more than most rare features to your view;
> But I, as I have ever done, deal simply,
> A mark of sweet simplicity ever noted
> In the family of the Syllis. Therefore, lady,
> Look not with too much contemplation on me;
> If you do, you are in the suds.
>
> Maid of Honour, Act i. sc. 2.

The author mixes his own feelings and judgments concerning the presumed fool; but the man himself, till mad, fights up against them, and betrays, by his attempts to modify them, that he is no fool at all, but one gifted with activity and copiousness of thought, image and expression, which belong not to a fool, but to a man of wit making himself merry with his own character.

5. There is an utter want of preparation in the decisive acts of Massinger's characters, as in Camiola and Aurelia in the Maid of Honour. Why? Because the *dramatis personæ* were all planned each by itself. Whereas in Shakspeare, the play is *syngenesia*; each character has, indeed, a life of its own, and is an *individuum* of itself, but yet an organ of the whole, as the heart in the human body. Shakspeare was a great comparative anatomist.

Hence Massinger and all, indeed, but Shakspeare, take a dislike to their own characters, and spite themselves upon them by making them talk like fools or monsters; as Fulgentio in his visit to Camiola, (Act ii. sc. 2.). Hence too, in Massinger, the continued flings at kings, courtiers, and all the favourites of fortune, like one who had enough of intellect to see injustice in his own inferiority in the share of the good things of life, but not genius enough to rise

above it, and forget himself. Beaumont and Fletcher have the same vice in the opposite pole, a servility of sentiment and a spirit of partizanship with the monarchical faction.

6. From the want of a guiding point in Massinger's characters, you never know what they are about. In fact they have no character.

7. Note the faultiness of his soliloquies, with connectives and arrangements that have no other motive but the fear lest the audience should not understand him.

8. A play of Massinger's produces no one single effect, whether arising from the spirit of the whole, as in the As You Like It; or from any one indisputably prominent character, as Hamlet. It is just "which you like best, gentlemen!"

9. The unnaturally irrational passions and strange whims of feeling which Massinger delights to draw, deprive the reader of all sound interest in the characters;—as in Mathias in the Picture, and in other instances.

10. The comic scenes in Massinger not only do not harmonize with the tragic, not only interrupt the feeling, but degrade the characters that are to form any part in the action of the piece, so as to render them unfit for any tragic interest. At least, they do not concern, or act upon, or modify, the principal characters. As when a gentleman is insulted by a mere blackguard,—it is the same as if any other accident of nature had occurred, a pig run under his legs, or his horse thrown him. There is no dramatic interest in it.

I like Massinger's comedies better than his tragedies, although where the situation requires it, he often rises into the truly tragic and pathetic. He excels in narration, and for the most part displays his mere story with skill. But he is not a poet of high imagination; he is like a Flemish painter, in whose delineations objects appear as they do in nature, have the same force and truth, and produce the same effect upon the spectator. But Shakspeare is beyond this; he always by metaphors and figures involves in the thing considered a universe of past and possible experiences; he mingles earth, sea and air, gives a soul to every thing, and at the same time that he inspires human feelings, adds a dignity in his images to human nature itself:—

> Full many a glorious morning have I seen
> Flatter the mountain tops with sovereign eye;

Kissing with golden face the meadows green,
Gilding pale streams with heavenly alchymy, &c.
33rd Sonnet.

Notes on Massinger.

Have I not over-rated Gifford's edition of Massinger ?—Not,—if I have, as but just is, main reference to the restitution of the text ; but yes, perhaps, if I were talking of the notes. These are more often wrong than right. In the Maid of Honour, Act i. sc. 5. Astutio describes Fulgentio as " A gentleman, yet no lord." Gifford supposes a transposition of the press for " No gentleman, yet a lord." But this would have no connection with what follows ; and we have only to recollect that " lord " means a lord of lands, to see that the after lines are explanatory. He is a man of high birth, but no landed property ;—as to the former, he is a distant branch of the blood royal ;—as to the latter, his whole rent lies in a narrow compass, the king's ear ! In the same scene the text stands :

Bert. No ! they are useful
For your *imitation* ;—I remember you, &c. ;—

and Gifford condemns Mason's conjecture of 'initiation' as void of meaning and harmony. Now my ear deceives me if 'initiation' be not the right word. In fact, 'imitation' is utterly impertinent to all that follows. Bertoldo tells Antonio that he had been initiated in the manners suited to the court by two or three sacred beauties, and that a similar experience would be equally useful for his initiation into the camp. Not a word of his imitation. Besides, I say the rhythm requires 'initiation,' and is lame as the verse now stands.

[1] Two or three tales, each in itself independent of the others, and united only by making the persons that are the agents in the story the *relations* of those in the other, as when a bind-weed or thread is twined round a bunch of flowers, each having its own root—and this novel narrative in *dialogue*—such is the *character* of Massinger's plays—That the juxta-position and the tying together by a common thread, which goes round this and round that,

[1] The notes on Massinger which follow were transcribed from a copy of that dramatist's works, belonging to Mr. Gillman. I do not know whence the first was taken by the original editor.

and then round them all, twine and intertwine, are contrived ingeniously—that the component tales are well chosen, and the whole well and conspicuously told; so as to excite and sustain the mind by kindling and keeping alive the curiosity of the reader—that the language is most pure, equally free from bookishness and from vulgarism, from the peculiarities of the School, and the transiencies of fashion, whether fine or coarse; that the rhythm and metre are incomparably good, and form the very model of dramatic versification, flexible and seeming to rise out of the passions, so that whenever a line sounds immetrical, the speaker may be certain he has recited it amiss, either that he has misplaced or misproportioned the emphasis, or neglected the acceleration or retardation of the voice in the pauses (all which the mood or passion would have produced in the real Agent, and therefore demand from the Actor or {translator / emulator}) and that read aright the blank verse is not less smooth than varied, a rich harmony, puzzling the fingers, but satisfying the ear—these are Massinger's characteristic merits.

Among the varieties of blank verse Massinger is fond of the anapæst in the first and third foot, as:

"Tŏ yoŭr mōre | thăn mă | scŭlinĕ reā | sŏn
thāt | cŏmmānds 'ĕm ||–" [1]
The Guardian, Act i. sc. 2.

Likewise of the second Pæon (∪ - ∪∪) in the first foot followed by four trochees (– ∪) as:

"Sŏ greēdĭly | lōng fŏr, | knōw thĕir |
titĭll | ātiŏns." Ib. ib.

The emphasis too has a decided influence on the metre, and, contrary to the metres of the Greek and Roman classics, at least to all their more common sorts of verse, as the hexameter and hex and pentameter, Alchaic, Sapphic, &c. has an essential agency on the character of the feet and power of the verse. One instance only of this I recollect in Theocritus:

τα μὴ κάλα καλὰ πέφαντάι,

[1] Gifford divides the lines in question thus:
"Command my sensual appetites.
Calip. As vassals to
Your more than masculine reason, that commands them."
But it is obviously better to make the first line end with "vassals," so as to give it only the one over-running syllable, which is so common in the last foot.

unless Homer's Ἄρες, Ἄρες, may (as I believe) be deemed another — For I cannot bring my ear to believe that Homer would have perpetrated such a cacophony as Ὦρες, Ἄρες.

" In feār | my chaasteetee | may be | sus-
pected." | Ib. ib.

In short, musical notes are required to explain Massinger —metres in addition to prosody. When a speech is interrupted, or one of the characters speaks aside, the last syllable of the former speech and first of the succeeding Massinger counts but for one, because both are supposed to be spoken at the same moment.

" And felt the sweetness *of't.*"
" *How* her mouth runs over."
Ib. ib.

Emphasis itself is twofold, the *rap* and the *drawl*, or the emphasis by quality of sound, and that by quantity—the hammer, and the spatula—the latter over 2, 3, 4 syllables or even a whole line. It is in this that the actors and speakers are generally speaking defective, they cannot equilibrate an emphasis, or spread it over a number of syllables, all emphasized, sometimes equally, sometimes unequally.

LECTURE VIII.

Don Quixote.

CERVANTES.

BORN at Madrid, 1547;—Shakspeare, 1564; both put off mortality on the same day, the 23rd of April, 1616,—the one in the sixty-ninth, the other in the fifty-second, year of his life. The resemblance in their physiognomies is striking, but with a predominance of acuteness in Cervantes, and of reflection in Shakspeare, which is the specific difference between the Spanish and English characters of mind.

I. The nature and eminence of Symbolical writing;—

II. Madness, and its different sorts, (considered without pretension to medical science);—

To each of these, or at least to my own notions respecting them, I must devote a few words of explanation, in order to render the after critique on Don Quixote, the master work of Cervantes' and his country's genius, easily and throughout intelligible. This is not the least valuable, though it may most often be felt by us both as the heaviest and least entertaining portion of these critical disquisitions: for without it, I must have foregone one at least of the two appropriate objects of a Lecture, that of interesting you during its delivery, and of leaving behind in your minds the germs of after-thought, and the materials for future enjoyment. To have been assured by several of my intelligent auditors that they have reperused Hamlet or Othello with increased satisfaction in consequence of the new points of view in which I had placed those characters—is the highest compliment I could receive or desire; and should the address of this evening open out a new source of pleasure, or enlarge the former in your perusal of Don Quixote, it will compensate for the failure of any personal or temporary object.

I. The Symbolical cannot, perhaps, be better defined in distinction from the Allegorical, than that it is always itself a part of that, of the whole of which it is the representative.—"Here comes a sail,"—(that is, a ship) is a symbolical expression. "Behold our lion!" when we speak of some gallant soldier, is allegorical. Of most importance to our present subject is this point, that the latter (the allegory) cannot be other than spoken consciously;—whereas in the former (the symbol) it is very possible that the general truth represented may be working unconsciously in the writer's mind during the construction of the symbol;—and it proves itself by being produced out of his own mind,—as the Don Quixote out of the perfectly sane mind of Cervantes; and not by outward observation, or historically. The advantage of symbolical writing over allegory is, that it presumes no disjunction of faculties, but simple predominance.

II. Madness may be divided as—

1. hypochondriasis; or, the man is out of his senses.
2. derangement of the understanding; or, the man is out of his wits.
3. loss of reason.
4. frenzy, or derangement of the sensations.

Cervantes's own preface to Don Quixote is a perfect model of the gentle, every where intelligible, irony in the best essays of the Tatler and the Spectator. Equally natural and easy, Cervantes is more spirited than Addison; whilst he blends with the terseness of Swift, an exquisite flow and music of style, and above all, contrasts with the latter by the sweet temper of a superior mind, which saw the follies of mankind, and was even at the moment suffering severely under hard mistreatment;[1] and yet seems every where to have but one thought as the undersong—"Brethren! with all your faults I love you still!"—or as a mother that chides the child she loves, with one hand holds up the rod, and with the other wipes off each tear as it drops!

Don Quixote was neither fettered to the earth by want, nor holden in its embraces by wealth;—of which, with the temperance natural to his country, as a Spaniard, he had both far too little, and somewhat too much, to be under any necessity of thinking about it. His age too, fifty, may be well supposed to prevent his mind from being tempted out of itself by any of the lower passions;—while his habits, as a very early riser and a keen sportsman, were such as kept his spare body in serviceable subjection to his will, and yet by the play of hope that accompanies pursuit, not only permitted, but assisted, his fancy in shaping what it would. Nor must we omit his meagreness and entire featureliness, face and frame, which Cervantes gives us at once: "It is said that his surname was *Quixada* or *Quesada*," &c.—even in this trifle showing an exquisite judgment;—just once insinuating the association of *lantern-jaws* into the reader's mind, yet not retaining it obtrusively like the names in old farces and in the Pilgrim's Progress,—but taking for the regular appellative one which had the no meaning of a proper name in real life, and which yet was capable of recalling a number of very different, but all pertinent, recollections, as old armour, the precious metals hidden in the ore, &c. Don Quixote's leanness and featureliness are happy exponents of the excess of the formative or imaginative in him, contrasted

[1] *Bien como quien se engendrò en una carcel, donde toda incomodidad tiene su assiento, y todo triste ruido hace su habitacion.* Like one you may suppose born in a prison, where every inconvenience keeps its residence, and every dismal sound its habitation. Pref. Jarvis's Tr. *Ed.*

with Sancho's plump rotundity, and recipiency of external impression.

He has no knowledge of the sciences or scientific arts which give to the meanest portions of matter an intellectual interest, and which enable the mind to decypher in the world of the senses the invisible agency—that alone, of which the world's phenomena are the effects and manifestations,—and thus, as in a mirror, to contemplate its own reflex, its life in the powers, its imagination in the symbolic forms, its moral instincts in the final causes, and its reason in the laws of material nature: but—estranged from all the motives to observation from self-interest—the persons that surround him too few and too familiar to enter into any connection with his thoughts, or to require any adaptation of his conduct to their particular characters or relations to himself—his judgment lies fallow, with nothing to excite, nothing to employ it. Yet,—and here is the point, where genius even of the most perfect kind, allotted but to few in the course of many ages, does not preclude the necessity in part, and in part counterbalance the craving by sanity of judgment, without which genius either cannot be, or cannot at least manifest itself,—the dependency of our nature asks for some confirmation from without, though it be only from the shadows of other men's fictions.

Too uninformed, and with too narrow a sphere of power and opportunity to rise into the scientific artist, or to be himself a patron of art, and with too deep a principle and too much innocence to become a mere projector, Don Quixote has recourse to romances:—

> His curiosity and extravagant fondness herein arrived at that pitch, that he sold many acres of arable land to purchase books of knight-errantry, and carried home all he could lay hands on of that kind! C. 1.

The more remote these romances were from the language of common life, the more akin on that very account were they to the shapeless dreams and strivings of his own mind; —a mind, which possessed not the highest order of genius which lives in an atmosphere of power over mankind, but that minor kind which, in its restlessness, seeks for a vivid representative of its own wishes, and substitutes the movements of that objective puppet for an exercise of actual power in and by itself. The more wild and improbable

these romances were, the more were they akin to his will, which had been in the habit of acting as an unlimited monarch over the creations of his fancy! Hence observe how the startling of the remaining common sense, like a glimmering before its death, in the notice of the impossible-improbable of Don Belianis, is dismissed by Don Quixote as impertinent—

He had some doubt [1] as to the dreadful wounds which Don Belianis gave and received: for he imagined, that notwithstanding the most expert surgeons had cured him, his face and whole body must still be full of seams and scars. *Nevertheless* [2] he commended in his author the concluding his book with a promise of that unfinishable adventure! C. 1.

Hence also his first intention to turn author; but who, with such a restless struggle within him, would content himself with writing in a remote village among apathists and ignorants? During his colloquies with the village priest and the barber surgeon, in which the fervour of critical controversy feeds the passion and gives reality to its object—what more natural than that the mental striving should become an eddy?—madness may perhaps be defined as the circling in a stream which should be progressive and adaptive; Don Quixote grows at length to be a man out of his wits; his understanding is deranged; and hence without the least deviation from the truth of nature, without losing the least trait of personal individuality, he becomes a substantial living allegory, or personification of the reason and the moral sense, divested of the judgment and the understanding. Sancho is the converse. He is the common sense without reason or imagination; and Cervantes not only shows the excellence and power of reason in Don Quixote, but in both him and Sancho the mischiefs resulting from a severance of the two main constituents of sound intellectual and moral action. Put him and his master together, and they form a perfect intellect; but they are separated and without cement; and hence each having a need of the other for its own completeness, each has at times a mastery over the other. For the common sense, although it may see the practical inapplicability of the dictates of the imagination or abstract reason, yet cannot help submitting to them. These two characters possess the world, alternately and interchange-

[1] *No estaba muy bien con.* Ed. [2] *Pero con todo.* Ed.

ably the cheater and the cheated. ' To impersonate them, and to combine the permanent with the individual, is one of the highest creations of genius, and has been achieved by Cervantes and Shakspeare, almost alone.

Observations on particular passages:

B. I. c. 1. But not altogether approving of his having broken it to pieces with so much ease, to secure himself from the like danger for the future, he made it over again, fencing it with small bars of iron within, in such a manner, *that he rested satisfied of its strength; and without caring to make a fresh experiment on it, he approved and looked upon it as a most excellent helmet.*

His not trying his improved scull-cap is an exquisite trait of human character, founded on the oppugnancy of the soul in such a state to any disturbance by doubt of its own broodings. Even the long deliberation about his horse's name is full of meaning;—for in these day-dreams the greater part of the history passes and is carried on in words, which look forward to other words as what will be said of them.

Ib. Near the place where he lived, there dwelt a very comely country lass, with whom he had formerly been in love; though, as it is supposed, she never knew it, nor troubled herself about it.

The nascent love for the country lass, but without any attempt at utterance, or an opportunity of knowing her, except as the hint—the ὅτι ἔστι— of the inward imagination, is happily conceived in both parts;—first, as confirmative of the shrinking back of the mind on itself, and its dread of having a cherished image destroyed by its own judgment; and secondly, as showing how necessarily love is the passion of novels. Novels are to love as fairy tales to dreams. I never knew but two men of taste and feeling who could not understand why I was delighted with the Arabian Nights' Tales, and they were likewise the only persons in my knowledge who scarcely remembered having ever dreamed. Magic and war—itself a magic—are the day-dreams of childhood; love is the day-dream of youth, and early manhood.

C. 2. "Scarcely had ruddy Phœbus spread the golden tresses of his beauteous hair over the face of the wide and spacious earth; and scarcely had the little painted birds, with the sweet and melli-

fluous harmony of their forked tongues, saluted the approach of rosy Aurora, who, quitting the soft couch of her jealous husband, disclosed herself to mortals through the gates of the Manchegan horizon; when the renowned Don Quixote," &c.

How happily already is the abstraction from the senses, from observation, and the consequent confusion of the judgment, marked in this description! The knight is describing objects immediate to his senses and sensations without borrowing a single trait from either. Would it be difficult to find parallel descriptions in Dryden's plays and in those of his successors?

C. 3. The host is here happily conceived as one who from his past life as a sharper, was capable of entering into and humouring the knight, and so perfectly in character, that he precludes a considerable source of improbability in the future narrative, by enforcing upon Don Quixote the necessity of taking money with him.

C. 3. "Ho, there, whoever thou art, rash knight, that approachest to touch the arms of the most valorous adventurer that ever girded sword," &c.

Don Quixote's high eulogiums on himself—"the most valorous adventurer!"—but it is not himself that he has before him, but the idol of his imagination, the imaginary being whom he is acting. And this, that it is entirely a third person, excuses his heart from the otherwise inevitable charge of selfish vanity; and so by madness itself he preserves our esteem, and renders those actions natural by which he, the first person, deserves it.

C. 4. Andres and his master.

The manner in which Don Quixote redressed this wrong, is a picture of the true revolutionary passion in its first honest state, while it is yet only a bewilderment of the understanding. You have a benevolence limitless in its prayers, which are in fact aspirations towards omnipotence; but between it and beneficence, the bridge of judgment—that is, of measurement of personal power—intervenes, and must be passed. Otherwise you will be bruised by the leap into the chasm, or be drowned in the revolutionary river, and drag others with you to the same fate.

C. 4. Merchants of Toledo.

When they were come so near as to be seen and heard, Don Quixote raised his voice, and with arrogant air cried out: "Let

the whole world stand; if the whole world does not confess that there is not in the whole world a damsel more beautiful than," &c.

Now mark the presumption which follows the self-complacency of the last act! That was an honest attempt to redress a real wrong; this is an arbitrary determination to enforce a Brissotine or Rousseau's ideal on all his fellow creatures.

Let the whole world stand!

'If there had been any experience in proof of the excellence of our code, where would be our superiority in this enlightened age?'

"No? the business is that without seeing her, you believe, confess, affirm, swear, and maintain it; *and if not, I challenge you all to battle.*" [1]

Next see the persecution and fury excited by opposition however moderate! The only words listened to are those, that without their context and their conditionals, and transformed into positive assertions, might give some shadow of excuse for the violence shown! This rich story ends, to the compassion of the men in their senses, in a sound rib-roasting of the idealist by the muleteer, the mob. And happy for thee, poor knight! that the mob were against thee! For had they been with thee, by the change of the moon and of them, thy head would have been off.

C. 5, first part. The idealist recollects the causes that had been necessary to the reverse and attempts to remove them—too late. He is beaten and disgraced.

C. 6. This chapter on Don Quixote's library proves that the author did not wish to destroy the romances, but to cause them to be read as romances—that is, for their merits as poetry.

C. 7. Among other things, Don Quixote told him, he should dispose himself to go with him willingly;—for some time or other such an adventure might present, that an island might be won, in the turn of a hand, and he be left governor thereof.

At length the promises of the imaginative reason begin to act on the plump, sensual, honest common sense accomplice, —but unhappily not in the same person, and without the *copula* of the judgment,—in hopes of the substantial good

[1] *Donde no, conmigo sois en lattalla, gente descomunal!* Ed.

things, of which the former contemplated only the glory and the colours.

C. 7. Sancho Panza went riding upon his ass, like any patriarch, with his wallet and leathern bottle, and with a vehement desire to find himself governor of the island which his master had promised him.

The first relief from regular labour is so pleasant to poor Sancho!

C. 8. "I no gentleman! I swear by the great God, thou liest, as I am a Christian. Biscainer by land, gentleman by sea, gentleman for the devil, and thou liest: look then if thou hast any thing else to say."

This Biscainer is an excellent image of the prejudices and bigotry provoked by the idealism of a speculator. This story happily detects the trick which our imagination plays in the description of single combats: only change the preconception of the magnificence of the combatants, and all is gone.

B. II. c. 2. "Be pleased, my lord Don Quixote, to bestow upon me the government of that island," &c.

Sancho's eagerness for his government, the nascent lust of actual democracy, or isocracy!

C. 2. "But tell me, on your life, have you ever seen a more valorous knight than I, upon the whole face of the known earth? Have you read in story of any other, who has, or ever had, more bravery in assailing, more breath in holding out, more dexterity in wounding, or more address in giving a fall?"—"The truth is," answered Sancho, "that I never read any history at all; for I can neither read nor write; but what I dare affirm is, that I never served a bolder master," &c.

This appeal to Sancho, and Sancho's answer are exquisitely humorous. It is impossible not to think of the French bulletins and proclamations. Remark the necessity under which we are of being sympathized with, fly as high into abstraction as we may, and how constantly the imagination is recalled to the ground of our common humanity! And note a little further on, the knight's easy vaunting of his balsam, and his quietly deferring the making and application of it.

C. 3. The speech before the goatherds:

"Happy times and happy ages," &c.[1]

[1] *Dichosa edad y siglos dichosos aquellos, &c.* Ed

Note the rhythm of this, and the admirable beauty and wisdom of the thoughts in themselves, but the total want of judgment in Don Quixote's addressing them to such an audience.

B. III. c. 3. Don Quixote's balsam, and the vomiting and consequent relief; an excellent hit at *panacea nostrums*, which cure the patient by his being himself cured of the medicine by revolting nature.

C. 4. "Peace! and have patience; the day will come," &c.

The perpetual promises of the imagination!

Ib. "Your Worship," said Sancho, "would make a better preacher than knight errant!"

Exactly so. This is the true moral.

C. 6. The uncommon beauty of the description in the commencement of this chapter. In truth, the whole of it seems to put all nature in its heights, and its humiliations, before us.

Ib. Sancho's story of the goats:

"Make account, he carried them all over," said Don Quixote, "and do not be going and coming in this manner; for at this rate, you will not have done carrying them over in a twelvemonth." "How many are passed already?" said Sancho, &c.

Observe the happy contrast between the all-generalizing mind of the mad knight, and Sancho's all-particularizing memory. How admirable a symbol of the dependence of all *copula* on the higher powers of the mind, with the single exception of the succession in time and the accidental relations of space. Men of mere common sense have no theory or means of making one fact more important or prominent than the rest; if they lose one link, all is lost. Compare Mrs. Quickly and the Tapster.[1] And note also Sancho's good heart, when his master is about to leave him. Don Quixote's conduct upon discovering the fulling-hammers, proves he was meant to be in his senses. Nothing can be better conceived than his fit of passion at Sancho's laughing, and his sophism of self-justification by the courage he had shown.

Sancho is by this time cured, through experience, as far as his own errors are concerned; yet still is he lured on by

[1] See the Friend, vol. iii. p. 138. *Ed.*

the unconquerable awe of his master's superiority, even when he is cheating him.

C. 8. The adventure of the Galley-slaves. I think this is the only passage of moment in which Cervantes slips the mask of his hero, and speaks for himself.

C. 9. Don Quixote desired to have it, and bade him take the money, and keep it for himself. Sancho kissed his hands for the favour, &c.

Observe Sancho's eagerness to avail himself of the permission of his master, who, in the war sports of knight-errantry, had, without any selfish dishonesty, overlooked the *meum* and *tuum*. Sancho's selfishness is modified by his involuntary goodness of heart, and Don Quixote's flighty goodness is debased by the involuntary or unconscious selfishness of his vanity and self-applause.

C. 10. Cardenio is the madman of passion, who meets and easily overthrows for the moment the madman of imagination. And note the contagion of madness of any kind, upon Don Quixote's interruption of Cardenio's story.

C. 11. Perhaps the best specimen of Sancho's proverbializing is this:

"And I (Don Q.) say again, they lie, and will lie two hundred times more, all who say, or think her so." "I neither say, nor think so," answered Sancho; "let those who say it, eat the lie, and swallow it with their bread: whether they were guilty or no, they have given an account to God before now: I come from my vineyard, I know nothing; I am no friend to inquiring into other men's lives; *for* he that buys and lies shall find the lie left in his purse behind; *besides*, naked was I born, and naked I remain; I neither win nor lose; if they were guilty, what is that to me? Many think to find bacon, where there is not so much as a pin to hang it on: *but* who can hedge in the cuckoo? *Especially*, do they spare God himself?"

Ib. "And it is no great matter, if it be in another hand; for by what I remember, Dulcinea can neither write nor read," &c.

The wonderful twilight of the mind! and mark Cervantes's courage in daring to present it, and trust to a distant posterity for an appreciation of its truth to nature.

P. II. B. III. c. 9. Sancho's account of what he had seen on Clavileno is a counterpart in his style to Don Quixote's adventures in the cave of Montesinos. This last is the only impeachment of the knight's moral character; Cervantes just gives one instance of the veracity failing before the strong cravings of the imagination for something real and

external; the picture would not have been complete without this; and yet it is so well managed, that the reader has no unpleasant sense of Don Quixote having told a lie. It is evident that he hardly knows whether it was a dream or not; and goes to the enchanter to inquire the real nature of the adventure.

Summary of Cervantes.

A Castilian of refined manners; a gentleman, true to religion, and true to honour.

A scholar and a soldier, and fought under the banners of Don John of Austria, at Lepanto, lost his arm and was captured.

Endured slavery not only with fortitude, but with mirth; and by the superiority of nature, mastered and overawed his barbarian owner.

Finally ransomed, he resumed his native destiny, the awful task of achieving fame; and for that reason died poor and a prisoner, while nobles and kings over their goblets of gold gave relish to their pleasures by the charms of his divine genius. He was the inventor of novels for the Spaniards, and in his Persilis and Sigismunda, the English may find the germ of their Robinson Crusoe.

The world was a drama to him. His own thoughts, in spite of poverty and sickness, perpetuated for him the feelings of youth. He painted only what he knew and had looked into, but he knew and had looked into much indeed; and his imagination was ever at hand to adapt and modify the world of his experience. Of delicious love he fabled, yet with stainless virtue.

LECTURE IX.

On the Distinctions of the Witty, the Droll, the Odd, and the Humourous; the Nature and Constituents of Humour; —Rabelais—Swift—Sterne.

I.

Perhaps the most important of our intellectual operations are those of detecting the difference in similar, and the identity in dissimilar, things. Out of the latter operation

it is that wit arises; and it, generically regarded, consists in presenting thoughts or images in an unusual connection with each other, for the purpose of exciting pleasure by the surprise. This connection may be real; and there is in fact a scientific wit; though where the object, consciously entertained, is truth, and not amusement, we commonly give it some higher name. But in wit popularly understood, the connection may be, and for the most part is, apparent only, and transitory; and this connection may be by thoughts, or by words, or by images. The first is our Butler's especial eminence; the second, Voltaire's; the third, which we oftener call fancy, constitutes the larger and more peculiar part of the wit of Shakspeare. You can scarcely turn to a single speech of Falstaff's without finding instances of it. Nor does wit always cease to deserve the name by being transient, or incapable of analysis. I may add that the wit of thoughts belongs eminently to the Italians, that of words to the French, and that of images to the English.

II. Where the laughable is its own end, and neither inference, nor moral is intended, or where at least the writer would wish it so to appear, there arises what we call drollery. The pure, unmixed, ludicrous or laughable belongs exclusively to the understanding, and must be presented under the form of the senses; it lies within the spheres of the eye and the ear, and hence is allied to the fancy. It does not appertain to the reason or the moral sense, and accordingly is alien to the imagination. I think Aristotle has already excellently defined[1] the laughable, τὸ γελοῖον, as consisting of, or depending on, what is out of its proper time and place, yet without danger or pain. Here the *impropriety*—τὸ ἄτοπον—is the positive qualification; the *dangerlessness*—τὸ ἀκίνδυνον—the negative. Neither the understanding without an object of the senses, as for example, a mere notional error, or idiocy; —nor any external object, unless attributed to the under-

[1] He elsewhere commends this Def.: "To resolve laughter into an expression of contempt is contrary to fact, and laughable enough. Laughter is a convulsion of the nerves, and it seems as if nature cut short the rapid thrill of pleasure on the nerves by a sudden convulsion of them to prevent the sensation becoming painful—*Aristotle's Def.* is as *good as can be.* Surprise at perceiving anything out of its usual place when the unusualness is not accompanied by a sense of serious danger. *Such* surprise is always pleasurable, and it is observable that surprise accompanied with circumstances of danger becomes Tragic. Hence *Farce* may often *border* on *Tragedy;* indeed *Farce* is *nearer Tragedy* in *its Essence* than *Comedy is.*"

Table Talk.

standing, can produce the poetically laughable. Nay, even in ridiculous positions of the body laughed at by the vulgar, there is a subtle personification always going on, which acts on the, perhaps, unconscious mind of the spectator as a symbol of intellectual character. And hence arises the imperfect and awkward effect of comic stories of animals; because although the understanding is satisfied in them, the senses are not. Hence too, it is, that the true ludicrous is its own end. When serious satire commences, or satire that is felt as serious, however comically drest, free and genuine laughter ceases; it becomes sardonic. This you experience in reading Young, and also not unfrequently in Butler. The true comic is the blossom of the nettle.

III. When words or images are placed in unusual juxtaposition rather than connection, and are so placed merely because the juxta-position is unusual—we have the odd or the grotesque; the occasional use of which in the minor ornaments of architecture, is an interesting problem for a student in the psychology of the Fine Arts.

IV. In the simply laughable there is a mere disproportion between a definite act and a definite purpose or end, or a disproportion of the end itself to the rank or circumstances of the definite person; but humour is of more difficult description. I must try to define it in the first place by its points of diversity from the former species. Humour does not, like the different kinds of wit, which is impersonal, consist wholly in the understanding and the senses. No combination of thoughts, words, or images will of itself constitute humour, unless some peculiarity of individual temperament and character be indicated thereby, as the cause of the same. Compare the comedies of Congreve with the Falstaff in Henry IV. or with Sterne's Corporal Trim, Uncle Toby, and Mr. Shandy, or with some of Steele's charming papers in the Tatler, and you will feel the difference better than I can express it. Thus again (to take an instance from the different works of the same writer), in Smollett's Strap, his Lieutenant Bowling, his Morgan the honest Welshman, and his Matthew Bramble, we have exquisite humour,—while in his Peregrine Pickle we find an abundance of drollery, which too often degenerates into mere oddity; in short, we feel that a number of things are put together to counterfeit humour,

but that there is no growth from within. And this indeed is the origin of the word, derived from the humoral pathology, and excellently described by Ben Jonson:

> So in every human body,
> The choler, melancholy, phlegm, and blood,
> By reason that they flow continually
> In some one part, and are not continent,
> Receive the name of humours. Now thus far
> It may, by metaphor, apply itself
> Unto the general disposition:
> As when some one peculiar quality
> Doth so possess a man, that it doth draw
> All his effects, his spirits, and his powers,
> In their confluctions, all to run one way,
> This may be truly said to be a humour.[1]

Hence we may explain the congeniality of humour with pathos, so exquisite in Sterne and Smollett, and hence also the tender feeling which we always have for, and associate with, the humours or hobby-horses of a man. First, we respect a humourist, because absence of interested motive is the groundwork of the character, although the imagination of an interest may exist in the individual himself, as if a remarkably simple-hearted man should pride himself on his knowledge of the world, and how well he can manage it: —and secondly, there always is in a genuine humour an acknowledgment of the hollowness and farce of the world, and its disproportion to the godlike within us. And it follows immediately from this, that whenever particular acts have reference to particular selfish motives, the humourous bursts into the indignant and abhorring; whilst all follies not selfish are pardoned or palliated. The danger of this habit, in respect of pure morality, is strongly exemplified in Sterne.

This would be enough, and indeed less than this has passed, for a sufficient account of humour, if we did not recollect that not every predominance of character, even where not precluded by the moral sense, as in criminal dispositions, constitutes what we mean by a humourist, or the presentation of its produce, humour. What then is it? Is it manifold? Or is there some one humorific point common to all that can be called humorous?—I am not prepared to answer this fully, even if my time permitted; but I think there is;— and that it consists in

[1] Every Man Out Of His Humour. Prologue.

a certain reference to the general and the universal, by which the finite great is brought into identity with the little, or the little with the finite great, so as to make both nothing in comparison with the infinite. The little is made great, and the great little, in order to destroy both; because all is equal in contrast with the infinite. "It is not without reason, brother Toby, that learned men write dialogues on long noses." [1] I would suggest, therefore, that whenever a finite is contemplated in reference to the infinite, whether consciously or unconsciously, humour essentially arises. In the highest humour, at least, there is always a reference to, and a connection with, some general power not finite, in the form of some finite ridiculously disproportionate in our feelings to that of which it is, nevertheless, the representative, or by which it is to be displayed. Humorous writers, therefore, as Sterne in particular, delight, after much preparation, to end in nothing, or in a direct contradiction.

That there is some truth in this definition, or origination of humour, is evident; for you cannot conceive a humorous man who does not give some disproportionate generality, or even a universality to his hobby-horse, as is the case with Mr. Shandy; or at least there is an absence of any interest but what arises from the humour itself, as in my Uncle Toby, and it is the idea of the soul, of its undefined capacity and dignity, that gives the sting to any absorption of it by any one pursuit, and this not in respect of the humourist as a mere member of society for a particular, however mistaken, interest, but as a man.

The English humour is the most thoughtful, the Spanish the most etherial—the most ideal—of modern literature. Amongst the classic ancients there was little or no humour in the foregoing sense of the term. Socrates, or Plato under his name, gives some notion of humour in the Banquet, when he argues that tragedy and comedy rest upon the same ground. But humour properly took its rise in the middle ages; and the Devil, the Vice of the mysteries, incorporates the modern humour in its elements. It is a spirit measured by disproportionate finites. The Devil is not, indeed, perfectly humorous; but that is only because he is the extreme of all humour.

[1] Trist. Sh. Vol. iii. c. 37

RABELAIS.[1]

Born at Chinon, 1483-4.—Died 1553.

One cannot help regretting that no friend of Rabelais, (and surely friends he must have had), has left an authentic account of him. His buffoonery was not merely Brutus' rough stick, which contained a rod of gold; it was necessary as an amulet against the monks and bigots. Beyond a doubt, he was among the deepest as well as boldest thinkers of his age. Never was a more plausible, and seldom, I am persuaded, a less appropriate line than the thousand times quoted,

Rabelais laughing in his easy chair—

of Mr. Pope The caricature of his filth and zanyism proves how fully he both knew and felt the danger in which he stood. I could write a treatise in proof and praise of the morality and moral elevation of Rabelais' work which would make the church stare, and the conventicle groan, and yet should be the truth and nothing but the truth. I class Rabelais with the creative minds of the world, Shakspeare, Dante, Cervantes, &c.

All Rabelais' personages are phantasmagoric allegories, but Panurge above all. He is throughout the *πανουργία*,—the wisdom, that is, the cunning of the human animal,—the understanding, as the faculty of means to purposes without ultimate ends, in a most comprehensive sense, and including art, sensuous fancy, and all the passions of the understanding. It is impossible to read Rabelais without an admiration mixed with wonder at the depth and extent of his learning, his multifarious knowledge, and original observation beyond what books could in that age have supplied him with.

B. III. c. 9. How Panurge asketh counsel of Pantagruel, whether he should marry, yea or no.

Note this incomparable chapter. Pantagruel stands for the reason as contradistinguished from the understanding

[1] No note remains of that part of this Lecture which treated of Rabelais. This seems, therefore, a convenient place for the reception of some remarks written by Mr C. in Mr. Gillman's copy of Rabelais, about the year 1825. See Table Talk, vol. i. p. 177. *Ed.*

and choice, that is, from Panurge; and the humour consists in the latter asking advice of the former on a subject in which the reason can only give the inevitable conclusion, the syllogistic *ergo*, from the premisses provided by the understanding itself, which puts each case so as of necessity to predetermine the verdict thereon. This chapter, independently of the allegory, is an exquisite satire on the spirit in which people commonly ask advice.

SWIFT.[1]

Born in Dublin, 1667.—Died 1745.

In Swift's writings there is a false misanthropy grounded upon an exclusive contemplation of the vices and follies of mankind, and this misanthropic tone is also disfigured or brutalized by his obtrusion of physical dirt and coarseness. I think Gulliver's Travels the great work of Swift. In the voyages to Lilliput and Brobdingnag he displays the littleness and moral contemptibility of human nature; in that to the Houyhnhnms he represents the disgusting spectacle of man with the understanding only, without the reason or the moral feeling, and in his horse he gives the misanthropic ideal of man—that is, a being virtuous from rule and duty, but untouched by the principle of love.

STERNE.

Born at Clonmel, 1713.—Died 1768.

With regard to Sterne, and the charge of licentiousness which presses so seriously upon his character as a writer, I would remark that there is a sort of knowingness, the wit of which depends—1st, on the modesty it gives pain to; or, 2dly, on the innocence and innocent ignorance over which it triumphs; or, 3dly, on a certain oscillation in the individual's own mind between the remaining good and the encroaching evil of his nature—a sort of dallying with the devil—a fluxionary act of combining courage and cowardice, as when a man snuffs a candle with his fingers for the first

[1] From Mr. Green's note. *Ed.*

time, or better still, perhaps, like that trembling daring with which a child touches a hot tea urn, because it has been forbidden; so that the mind has in its own white and black angel the same or similar amusement, as may be supposed to take place between an old debauchee and a prude,—she feeling resentment, on the one hand, from a prudential anxiety to preserve appearances and have a character, and, on the other, an inward sympathy with the enemy. We have only to suppose society innocent, and then nine-tenths of this sort of wit would be like a stone that falls in snow, making no sound because exciting no resistance; the remainder rests on its being an offence against the good manners of human nature itself.

This source, unworthy as it is, may doubtless be combined with wit, drollery, fancy, and even humour, and we have only to regret the misalliance; but that the latter are quite distinct from the former, may be made evident by abstracting in our imagination the morality of the characters of Mr. Shandy, my Uncle Toby, and Trim, which are all antagonists to this spurious sort of wit, from the rest of Tristram Shandy. And by supposing, instead of them, the presence of two or three callous debauchees. The result will be pure disgust. Sterne cannot be too severely censured for thus using the best dispositions of our nature as the panders and condiments for the basest.

The excellencies of Sterne consist—

1. In bringing forward into distinct consciousness those minutiæ of thought and feeling which appear trifles, yet have an importance for the moment, and which almost every man feels in one way or other. Thus is produced the novelty of an individual peculiarity, together with the interest of a something that belongs to our common nature. In short, Sterne seizes happily on those points, in which every man is more or less a humourist. And, indeed, to be a little more subtle, the propensity to notice these things does itself constitute the humourist, and the superadded power of so presenting them to men in general gives us the man of humour. Hence the difference of the man of humour, the effect of whose portraits does not depend on the felt presence of himself, as a humourist, as in the instances of Cervantes and Shakspeare—nay, of Rabelais too; and of the humourist, the effect of whose works does very much depend on the sense of his own oddity, as in Sterne's

case, and perhaps Swift's; though Swift again would require a separate classification.

2. In the traits of human nature, which so easily assume a particular cast and colour from individual character. Hence this excellence and the pathos connected with it quickly pass into humour, and form the ground of it. See particularly the beautiful passage, so well known, of Uncle Toby's catching and liberating the fly:

"Go,"—says he, one day at dinner, to an overgrown one which had buzzed about his nose, and tormented him cruelly all dinner-time, and which, after infinite attempts, he had caught at last, as it flew by him;—"I'll not hurt thee," says my Uncle Toby, rising from his chair, and going across the room, with the fly in his hand,—"I'll not hurt a hair of thy head:—"Go," says he, lifting up the sash, and opening his hand as he spoke, to let it escape;—"go, poor devil, get thee gone, why should I hurt thee? This world is surely wide enough to hold both thee and me." Vol. ii. ch. 12.

Observe in this incident how individual character may be given by the mere delicacy of presentation and elevation in degree of a common good quality, humanity, which in itself would not be characteristic at all.

3. In Mr. Shandy's character,—the essence of which is a craving for sympathy in exact proportion to the oddity and unsympathizability of what he proposes;—this coupled with an instinctive desire to be at least disputed with, or rather both in one, to dispute and yet to agree—and holding as worst of all—to acquiesce without either resistance or sympathy. This is charmingly, indeed, profoundly conceived, and is psychologically and ethically true of all Mr. Shandies. Note, too, how the contrasts of character, which are always either balanced or remedied, increase the love between the brothers.

4. No writer is so happy as Sterne in the unexaggerated and truly natural representation of that species of slander, which consists in gossiping about our neighbours, as whetstones of our moral discrimination; as if they were conscience-blocks which we used in our apprenticeship, in order not to waste such precious materials as our own consciences in the trimming and shaping of ourselves by self-examination:—

Alas o'day!—had Mrs. Shandy, (poor gentlewoman!) had but her wish in going up to town just to lie in and come down again;

which, they say, she begged and prayed for upon her bare knees, and which, in my opinion, considering the fortune which Mr. Shandy got with her, was no such mighty matter to have complied with, the lady and her babe might both of them have been alive at this hour. Vol. i. c. 18.

5. When you have secured a man's likings and prejudices in your favour, you may then safely appeal to his impartial judgment. In the following passage not only is acute sense shrouded in wit, but a life and a character are added which exalt the whole into the dramatic :—

" I see plainly, Sir, by your looks " (or as the case happened) my father would say—" that you do not heartily subscribe to this opinion of mine—which, to those," he would add, " who have not carefully sifted it to the bottom,—I own has an air more of fancy than of solid reasoning in it ; and yet, my dear Sir, if I may presume to know your character, I am morally assured I should hazard little in stating a case to you, not as a party in the dispute, but as a judge, and trusting my appeal upon it to your good sense and candid disquisition in this matter ; you are a person free from as many narrow prejudices of education as most men ; and, if I may presume to penetrate farther into you, of a liberality of genius above bearing down an opinion, merely because it wants friends. Your son,—your dear son,—from whose sweet and open temper you have so much to expect,—your Billy, Sir !—would you, for the world, have called him JUDAS ? Would you, my dear Sir, he would say, laying his hand upon your breast, with the genteelest address,—and in that soft and irresistible *piano* of voice, which the nature of the *argumentum ad hominem* absolutely requires,—" Would you, Sir, if a *Jew* of a godfather had proposed the name for your child, and offered you his purse along with it, would you have consented to such a desecration of him ? O my God ! " he would say, looking up, " if I know your temper rightly, Sir, you are incapable of it ;—you would have trampled upon the offer ;—you would have thrown the temptation at the tempter's head with abhorrence. Your greatness of mind in this action, which I admire, with that generous contempt of money, which you show me in the whole transaction, is really noble ;—and what renders it more so, is the principle of it ;—the workings of a parent's love upon the truth and conviction of this very hypothesis, namely, that were your son called Judas,—the sordid and treacherous idea, so inseparable from the name, would have accompanied him through life like his shadow, and in the end made a miser and a rascal of him, in spite, Sir, of your example." Vol. i. c. 19.

6. There is great physiognomic tact in Sterne. See it particularly displayed in his description of Dr. Slop, accompanied with all that happiest use of drapery and attitude, which at once give reality by individualizing and vividness by unusual, yet probable, combinations :—

Imagine to yourself a little squat uncourtly figure of a Doctor

Slop, of about four feet and a half perpendicular height, with a breadth of back, and a sesquipedality of belly, which might have done honour to a serjeant in the horseguards.

* * * * *

Imagine such a one ;—for such, I say, were the outlines of Doctor Slop's figure, coming slowly along, foot by foot, waddling through the dirt upon the *vertebræ* of a little diminutive pony, of a pretty colour—but of strength,—alack ! scarce able to have made an amble of it, under such a fardel, had the roads been in an ambling condition ;—they were not. Imagine to yourself Obadiah mounted upon a strong monster of a coach-horse, pricked into a full gallop, and making all practicable speed the adverse way. Vol. ii. c. 9.

7. I think there is more humour in the single remark, which I have quoted before—" Learned men, brother Toby, don't write dialogues upon long noses for nothing ! " —than in the whole Slawkenburghian tale that follows, which is mere oddity interspersed with drollery.

8. Note Sterne's assertion of, and faith in a moral good in the characters of Trim, Toby, &c. as contrasted with the cold scepticism of motives which is the stamp of the Jacobin spirit. Vol. v. c. 9.

9. You must bear in mind, in order to do justice to Rabelais and Sterne, that by right of humoristic universality each part is essentially a whole in itself. Hence the digressive spirit is not mere wantonness, but in fact the very form and vehicle of their genius. The connection, such as was needed, is given by the continuity of the characters.

Instances of different forms of wit, taken largely :

1. " Why are you reading romances at your age ? "—" Why, I used to be fond of history, but I have given it up,—it was so grossly improbable."

2. " Pray, sir, do it !—although you have promised me."

3. The Spartan's mother—

" Return with, or on, thy shield."

" My sword is too short ! "—" Take a step forwarder."

4. The Gasconade :—

" I believe you, Sir ! but you will excuse my repeating it on account of my provincial accent."

5. Pasquil on Pope Urban, who had employed a committee to rip up the old errors of his predecessors.

Some one placed a pair of spurs on the heels of the

statue of St. Peter, and a label from the opposite statue of St. Paul, on the same bridge ;—

St. Paul. "Whither then are you bound ?"
St. Peter. "I apprehend danger here ;—they'll soon call me in question for denying my Master."
St. Paul. "Nay, then, I had better be off too ; for they'll question me for having persecuted the Christians, before my conversion."

6. Speaking of the small German potentates, I dictated the phrase,—*officious for equivalents.* This my amanuensis wrote,—*fishing for elephants ;*—which, as I observed at the time, was a sort of Noah's angling, that could hardly have occurred, except at the commencement of the Deluge.

LECTURE X.

Donne—Dante—Milton—Paradise Lost.

DONNE.[1]

Born in London, 1573.—Died, 1631.

With Donne, whose muse on dromedary trots,
Wreathe iron pokers into true-love knots ;
Rhyme's sturdy cripple, fancy's maze and clue,
Wit's forge and fire-blast, meaning's press and screw.

See lewdness and theology combin'd,—
A cynic and a sycophantic mind ;
A fancy shar'd party per pale between
Death's heads and skeletons, and Aretine !—
Not his peculiar defect or crime,
But the true current mintage of the time.
Such were the establish'd signs and tokens given
To mark a loyal churchman, sound and even,
Free from papistic and fanatic leaven.

THE wit of Donne, the wit of Butler, the wit of Pope, the wit of Congreve, the wit of Sheridan—how many disparate things are here expressed by one and the same word, Wit !

[1] Nothing remains of what was said on Donne in this Lecture. Here, therefore, as in previous like instances, the gap is filled up with some notes written by Mr. Coleridge in a volume of Chalmers' Poets, belonging to Mr. Gillman. The verses were added in

—Wonder-exciting vigour, intenseness and peculiarity of thought, using at will the almost boundless stores of a capacious memory, and exercised on subjects, where we have no right to expect it—this is the wit of Donne! The four others I am just in the mood to describe and inter-distinguish;—what a pity that the marginal space will not let me!

> My face in thine eye, thine in mine appears,
> And true plain hearts do in the faces rest;
> Where can we find two fitter hemispheres
> Without sharp north, without declining west?
> Good-Morrow, v. 15, &c.

The sense is;—Our mutual loves may in many respects be fitly compared to corresponding hemispheres; but as no simile squares (*nihil simile est idem*), so here the simile fails, for there is nothing in our loves that corresponds to the cold north, or the declining west, which in two hemispheres must necessarily be supposed. But an ellipse of such length will scarcely rescue the line from the charge of nonsense or a bull. *January*, 1829.

Woman's constancy.

A misnomer. The title ought to be—

Mutual Inconstancy.

> Whether both th' Indias of spice and *mine*, &c.
> Sun Rising, v. 17.
> And see at night thy western land of *mine*, &c.
> Progress of the Soul, 1 Song, 2. st.

This use of the word *mine* specifically for mines of gold, silver, or precious stones, is, I believe, peculiar to Donne.

DANTE.

Born at Florence, 1265.—Died, 1321.

As I remarked in a former Lecture on a different subject (for subjects the most diverse in literature have still their tangents), the Gothic character, and its good and evil fruits, appeared less in Italy than in any other part of European Christendom. There was accordingly much less romance, as that word is commonly understood; or,

pencil to the collection of commendatory lines; No. I. is Mr C.'s; the publication of No. II. I trust the all-accomplished author will, under the circumstances, pardon. Numerous and elaborate notes by Mr Coleridge on Donne's Sermons are in existence, and will be published hereafter. *Ed.*

perhaps, more truly stated, there was romance instead of chivalry. In Italy, an earlier imitation of, and a more evident and intentional blending with, the Latin literature took place than elsewhere. The operation of the feudal system, too, was incalculably weaker, of that singular chain of independent interdependents, the principle of which was a confederacy for the preservation of individual, consistently with general, freedom. In short, Italy, in the time of Dante, was an after-birth of eldest Greece, a renewal or a reflex of the old Italy under its kings and first Roman consuls, a net-work of free little republics, with the same domestic feuds, civil wars, and party spirit,—the same vices and virtues produced on a similarly narrow theatre,—the existing state of things being, as in all small democracies, under the working and direction of certain individuals, to whose will even the laws were swayed;—whilst at the same time the singular spectacle was exhibited amidst all this confusion of the flourishing of commerce, and the protection and encouragement of letters and arts. Never was the commercial spirit so well reconciled to the nobler principles of social polity as in Florence. It tended there to union and permanence and elevation,—not as the overbalance of it in England is now doing, to dislocation, change and moral degradation. The intensest patriotism reigned in these communities, but confined and attached exclusively to the small locality of the patriot's birth and residence; whereas in the true Gothic feudalism, country was nothing but the preservation of personal independence. But then, on the other hand, as a counterbalance to these disuniting elements, there was in Dante's Italy, as in Greece, a much greater uniformity of religion common to all than amongst the northern nations.

Upon these hints the history of the republican æras of ancient Greece and modern Italy ought to be written. There are three kinds or stages of historic narrative;—1. that of the annalist or chronicler, who deals merely in facts and events arranged in order of time, having no principle of selection, no plan of arrangement, and whose work properly constitutes a supplement to the poetical writings of romance or heroic legends:—2. that of the writer who takes his stand on some moral point, and selects a series of events for the express purpose of illustrating it, and in

whose hands the narrative of the selected events is modified by the principle of selection ;—as Thucydides, whose object was to describe the evils of democratic and aristocratic partizanships ;—or Polybius, whose design was to show the social benefits resulting from the triumph and grandeur of Rome, in public institutions and military discipline ;—or Tacitus, whose secret aim was to exhibit the pressure and corruptions of despotism ;—in all which writers and others like them, the ground-object of the historian colours with artificial lights the facts which he relates :—3. and which in idea is the grandest—the most truly founded in philosophy —there is the Herodotean history, which is not composed with reference to any particular causes, but attempts to describe human nature itself on a great scale as a portion of the drama of providence, the free will of man resisting the destiny of events,—for the individuals often succeeding against it, but for the race always yielding to it, and in the resistance itself invariably affording means towards the completion of the ultimate result. Mitford's history is a good and useful work ; but in his zeal against democratic government, Mitford forgot, or never saw, that ancient Greece was not, nor ought ever to be considered, a permanent thing, but that it existed, in the disposition of providence, as a proclaimer of ideal truths, and that everlasting proclamation being made, that its functions were naturally at an end.

However, in the height of such a state of society in Italy, Dante was born and flourished ; and was himself eminently a picture of the age in which he lived. But of more importance even than this, to a right understanding of Dante, is the consideration that the scholastic philosophy was then at its acme even in itself ; but more especially in Italy, where it never prevailed so exclusively as northward of the Alps. It is impossible to understand the genius of Dante, and difficult to understand his poem, without some knowledge of the characters, studies, and writings of the schoolmen of the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth centuries. For Dante was the living link between religion and philosophy ; he philosophized the religion and christianized the philosophy of Italy ; and, in this poetic union of religion and philosophy, he became the ground of transition into the mixed Platonism and Aristotelianism of the Schools, under which, by numerous minute articles of faith

and ceremony, Christianity became a craft of hair-splitting, and was ultimately degraded into a complete *fetisch* worship, divorced from philosophy, and made up of a faith without thought, and a credulity directed by passion. Afterwards, indeed, philosophy revived under condition of defending this very superstition; and, in so doing, it necessarily led the way to its subversion, and that in exact proportion to the influence of the philosophic schools. Hence it did its work most completely in Germany, then in England, next in France, then in Spain, least of all in Italy. We must, therefore, take the poetry of Dante as christianized, but without the further Gothic accession of proper chivalry. It was at a somewhat later period, that the importations from the East, through the Venetian commerce and the crusading armaments, exercised a peculiarly strong influence on Italy.

In studying Dante, therefore, we must consider carefully the differences produced, first, by allegory being substituted for polytheism; and secondly and mainly, by the opposition of Christianity to the spirit of pagan Greece, which receiving the very names of its gods from Egypt, soon deprived them of all that was universal. The Greeks changed the ideas into finites, and these finites into *anthropomorphi*, or forms of men. Hence their religion, their poetry, nay, their very pictures, became statuesque. With them the form was the end. The reverse of this was the natural effect of Christianity; in which finites, even the human form, must, in order to satisfy the mind, be brought into connexion with, and be in fact symbolical of, the infinite; and must be considered in some enduring, however shadowy and indistinct, point of view, as the vehicle or representative of moral truth.

Hence resulted two great effects; a combination of poetry with doctrine, and, by turning the mind inward on its own essence instead of letting it act only on its outward circumstances and communities, a combination of poetry with sentiment. And it is this inwardness or subjectivity, which principally and most fundamentally distinguishes all the classic from all the modern poetry. Compare the passage in the Iliad (Z'. vi. 119—236) in which Diomed and Glaucus change arms.—

Χεῖράς τ' ἀλλήλων λαβέτην καὶ πιστώσαντο—
They took each other by the hand, and pledged friendship—

with the scene in Ariosto (Orlando Furioso, c. 1. st. 20-22), where Rinaldo and Ferrauto fight and afterwards make it up :—

Al Pagan la proposta non dispiacque :
Così fu differita la tenzone ;
E tal tregua tra lor subito nacque,
Sì l' odio e l' ira va in oblivione,
Che 'l Pagano al partir dalle fresche acque
Non lasciò a piede il buon figliuol d' Amone ;
Con preghi invita, e al fin lo toglie in groppa,
E per l' orme d' Angelica galoppa.

Here Homer would have left it. But the Christian poet has his own feelings to express, and goes on :—

Oh gran bontà de' cavalieri antiqui !
Eran rivali, eran di fè diversi,
E si sentian degli aspri colpi iniqui
Per tutta la persona anco dolersi ;
E pur per selve oscure e calli obbliqui
Insieme van senza sospetto aversi !

And here you will observe, that the reaction of Ariosto's own feelings on the image or act is more fore-grounded (to use a painter's phrase) than the image or act itself.

The two different modes in which the imagination is acted on by the ancient and modern poetry, may be illustrated by the parallel effects caused by the contemplation of the Greek or Roman-Greek architecture, compared with the Gothic. In the Pantheon, the whole is perceived in a perceived harmony with the parts which compose it ; and generally you will remember that where the parts preserve any distinct individuality, there simple beauty, or beauty simply, arises, but where the parts melt undistinguished into the whole, there majestic beauty, or majesty, is the result. In York Minster, the parts, the grotesques, are in themselves very sharply distinct and separate, and this distinction and separation of the parts is counterbalanced only by the multitude and variety of those parts, by which the attention is bewildered ;—whilst the whole, or that there is a whole produced, is altogether a feeling in which the several thousand distinct impressions lose themselves as in a universal solvent. Hence in a Gothic cathedral, as in a prospect from a mountain's top, there is, indeed, a unity, an awful oneness ;—but it is, because all distinction

evades the eye. And just such is the distinction between the Antigone of Sophocles and the Hamlet of Shakspeare.[1]

The Divina Commedia is a system of moral, political, and theological truths, with arbitrary personal exemplifications, which are not, in my opinion, allegorical. I do not even feel convinced that the punishments in the Inferno are strictly allegorical. I rather take them to have been in Dante's mind *quasi*-allegorical, or conceived in analogy to pure allegory.

I have said, that a combination of poetry with doctrines, is one of the characteristics of the Christian muse; but I think Dante has not succeeded in effecting this combination nearly so well as Milton.

This comparative failure of Dante, as also some other peculiarities of his mind, *in malam partem*, must be immediately attributed to the state of North Italy in his time, which is vividly represented in Dante's life; a state of intense democratical partizanship, in which an exaggerated importance was attached to individuals, and which whilst it afforded a vast field for the intellect, opened also a boundless arena for the passions, and in which envy, jealousy, hatred, and other malignant feelings could and did assume the form of patriotism, even to the individual's own conscience.

All this common, and, as it were, natural partizanship, was aggravated and coloured by the Guelf and Ghibelline factions; and, in part explanation of Dante's adherence to the latter, you must particularly remark, that the Pope had recently territorialized his authority to a great extent, and that this increase of territorial power in the church, was by no means the same beneficial movement for the citizens of free republics, as the parallel advance in other countries was for those who groaned as vassals under the oppression of the circumjacent baronial castles.[2]

By way of preparation to a satisfactory perusal of the Divina Commedia, I will now proceed to state what I consider to be Dante's chief excellences as a poet. And I begin with

I. Style—the vividness, logical connexion, strength and energy of which cannot be surpassed. In this I think

[1] See Lect. I. p. 218, and note: and compare with Schlegel's *Dram. Vorlesung.* Essay on Shakspeare, p. 12.

[2] Mr. Coleridge here notes: "I will, if I can, here make an historical movement, and pay a proper compliment to Mr. Hallam." *Ed.*

Dante superior to Milton; and his style is accordingly more imitable than Milton's, and does to this day exercise a greater influence on the literature of his country. You cannot read Dante without feeling a gush of manliness of thought within you. Dante was very sensible of his own excellence in this particular, and speaks of poets as guardians of the vast armory of language, which is the intermediate something between matter and spirit :—

Or se' tu quel Virgilio, e quella fonte,
Che spande di parlar sì largo fiume?
Risposi lui con vergognosa fronte.
O degli altri poeti onore e lume,
Vagliami 'l lungo studio e 'l grande amore,
Che m' han fatto cercar lo tuo volume.
Tu se' lo mio maestro, e 'l mio autore:
Tu se' solo colui, da cu' io tolsi
Lo bello stile, che m' ha fatto onore.

Inf. c. 1. v. 79.

"And art thou then that Virgil, that well-spring,
From which such copious floods of eloquence
Have issued?" I, with front abash'd, replied.
"Glory and light of all the tuneful train!
May it avail me, that I long with zeal
Have sought thy volume, and with love immense
Have conn'd it o'er. My master, thou, and guide!
Thou he from whom I have alone deriv'd
That style, which for its beauty into fame
Exalts me."

CARY.

Indeed there was a passion and a miracle of words in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, after the long slumber of language in barbarism, which gave an almost romantic character, a virtuous quality and power, to what was read in a book, independently of the thoughts or images contained in it. This feeling is very often perceptible in Dante.

II. The Images in Dante are not only taken from obvious nature, and are all intelligible to all, but are ever conjoined with the universal feeling received from nature, and therefore affect the general feelings of all men. And in this respect, Dante's excellence is very great, and may be contrasted with the idiosyncracies of some meritorious modern poets, who attempt an eruditeness, the result of particular feelings. Consider the simplicity, I may say plainness, of the following simile, and how differently we should in all probability deal with it at the present day:

Quale i fioretti dal notturno gelo
Chinati e chiusi, poi che 'l sol gl' imbianca,
Si drizzan tutti aperti in loro stelo,—
Fal mi fec' io di mia virtute stanca :

Inf. c. 2. v. 127.

As florets, by the frosty air of night
Bent down and clos'd, when day has blanch'd their leaves,
Rise all unfolded on their spiry stems,—
So was my fainting vigour new restor'd.

CARY.[1]

III. Consider the wonderful profoundness of the whole third canto of the Inferno ; and especially of the inscription over Hell gate :

Per me si va, &c.—

which can only be explained by a meditation on the true nature of religion ; that is,—reason *plus* the understanding. I say profoundness rather than sublimity ; for Dante does not so much elevate your thoughts as send them down deeper. In this canto all the images are distinct, and even vividly distinct ; but there is a total impression of infinity ; the wholeness is not in vision or conception, but in an inner feeling of totality, and absolute being.

IV. In picturesqueness, Dante is beyond all other poets, modern, or ancient, and more in the stern style of Pindar, than of any other. Michael Angelo is said to have made a design for every page of the Divina Commedia. As superexcellent in this respect, I would note the conclusion of the third canto of the Inferno :

Ed ecco verso noi venir per nave
Un vecchio bianco per antico pelo
Gridando : guai a voi anime prave . &c.

Ver. 82. &c.

* * * * * *

And lo ! toward us in a bark
Comes on an old man, hoary white with eld,
Crying, " Woe to you, wicked spirits ! "

* * * * * *

CARY.

Caron dimonio con occhi di bragia
Loro accennando, tutte le raccoglie :
Batte col remo qualunque s' adagia.
Come d' autunno si levan le foglie

[1] Mr. Coleridge here notes : " Here to speak of Mr. Cary's translation. —*Ed.*

L' una appresso dell' altra, infin che 'l ramo
Rende alla terra tutte le sue spoglie ;
Similemente il mal seme d' Adamo,
Gittansi di quel lito ad una ad una
Per cenni, com' augel per suo richiamo.

Ver. 100, &c.

————Charon, demoniac form,
With eyes of burning coal, collects them all,
Beck'ning, and each that lingers, with his oar
Strikes. As fall off the light autumnal leaves,
One still another following, till the bough
Strews all its honours on the earth beneath ;—
E'en in like manner Adam's evil brood
Cast themselves one by one down from the shore
Each at a beck, as falcon at his call. CARY.

And this passage, which I think admirably picturesque :

Ma poco valse, che l' ale al sospetto
Non potero avanzar : quegli andò sotto,
E quei drizzò, volando, suso il petto :
Non altrimenti l' anitra di botto,
Quando 'l falcon s' appressa, giu s' attuffa,
Ed ei ritorna su crucciato e rotto.
Irato Calcabrina della buffa,
Volando dietro gli tenne, invaghito,
Che quei campasse, per aver la zuffa :
E come 'l barattier fu disparito,
Così volse gli artigli al suo compagno,
E fu con lui sovra 'l fosso ghermito.
Ma l' altro fu bene sparvier grifagno
Ad artigliar ben lui, e amedue
Cadder nel mezzo del bollente stagno.
Lo caldo sghermidor subito fue :
Ma però di levarsi era mente,
Sì aveano inviscate l' ale sue.

Infer. c. xxii. ver. 127, &c.

But little it avail'd : terror outstripp'd
His following flight : the other plung'd beneath,
And he with upward pinion rais'd his breast.
E'en thus the water-fowl, when she perceives
The falcon near, dives instant down, while he
Enrag'd and spent retires. That mockery
In Calcabrina fury stirr'd, who flew
After him, with desire of strife inflam'd ;
And, for the barterer had 'scap'd, so turn'd
His talons on his comrade. O'er the dyke
In grapple close they join'd ; but th' other prov'd
A goshawk, able to rend well his foe ;
And in the boiling lake both fell. The heat
Was umpire soon between them, but in vain
To lift themselves they strove, so fast were glued
Their pennons. CARY.

V. Very closely connected with this picturesqueness, is the topographic reality of Dante's journey through Hell. You should note and dwell on this as one of his great charms, and which gives a striking peculiarity to his poetic power. He thus takes the thousand delusive forms of a nature worse than chaos, having no reality but from the passions which they excite, and compels them into the service of the permanent. Observe the exceeding truth of these lines:

Noi ridemmo 'l cerchio all' altra riva,
Sovr' una fonte che bolle, e riversa,
Per un fossato che da lei diriva.
L' acqua era buja molto più che persa:
E noi in compagnia dell' onde bige
Entrammo giù per una via diversa.
Una palude fa, ch' ha nome Stige,
Questo tristo ruscel, quando è disceso
Al pie delle maligne piagge grige.
Ed io che di mirar mi stava inteso,—
Vidi genti fangose in quel pantano
Ignude tutte, e con sembiante offeso.
Questi si percotean non pur con mano,
Ma con la testa, e col petto, e co' piedi,
Troncandosi co' denti a brano a brano
* * * * * *
Così girammo della lorda pozza
Grand' arco tra la ripa secca e 'l mezzo,
Con gli occhi volti a chi del fango ingozza:
Venimmo appiè d' una torre al dassezzo.

C. vii. ver. 100 and 127.

——We the circle cross'd
To the next steep, arriving at a well,
That boiling pours itself down to a loss
Sluic'd from its source. Far murkier was the wave
Than sablest grain: and we in company
Of th' inky waters, journeying by their side,
Enter'd, though by a different track, beneath.
Into a lake, the Stygian nam'd, expands
The dismal stream, when it hath reach'd the foot
Of the grey wither'd cliffs. Intent I stood
To gaze, and in the marsh sunk, descried
A miry tribe, all naked, and with looks
Betok'ning rage. They with their hands alone
Struck not, but with the head, the breast, the feet,
Cutting each other piecemeal with their fangs.

* * * * * *

——Our route
Thus compass'd, we a segment widely stretch'd
Between the dry embankment and the cove

Of the loath'd pool, turning meanwhile our eyes
Downward on those who gulp'd its muddy lees;
Nor stopp'd, till to a tower's low base we came.

CARY.

VI. For Dante's power,—his absolute mastery over, although rare exhibition of, the pathetic, I can do no more than refer to the passages on Francesca di Rimini (Infer. C. v. ver. 73 to the end) and on Ugolino, (Infer. C. xxxiii. ver. 1 to 75.) They are so well known, and rightly so admired, that it would be pedantry to analyze their composition; but you will note that the first is the pathos of passion, the second that of affection; and yet even in the first, you seem to perceive that the lovers have sacrificed their passion to the cherishing of a deep and rememberable impression.

VII. As to going into the endless subtle beauties of Dante, that is impossible; but I cannot help citing the first triplet of the 29th canto of the Inferno:

La molta gente e le diverse piaghe
Avean le luci mie sì inebriate,
Che dello stare a piangere eran vaghe.

So were mine eyes inebriate with the view
Of the vast multitude, whom various wounds
Disfigur'd, that they long'd to stay and weep.

CARY.

Nor have I now room for any specific comparison of Dante with Milton. But if I had, I would institute it upon the ground of the last canto of the Inferno from the 1st to the 69th line, and from the 106th to the end. And in this comparison I should notice Dante's occasional fault of becoming grotesque from being too graphic without imagination; as in his Lucifer compared with Milton's Satan. Indeed he is sometimes horrible rather than terrible, — falling into the μισητὸν instead of the δεινὸν of Longinus;[1] in other words, many of his images excite bodily disgust, and not moral fear. But here, as in other cases, you may perceive that the faults of great authors are generally excellencies carried to an excess.

[1] De Subl. l. ix.

MILTON.

Born in London, 1608.—Died, 1674.

If we divide the period from the accession of Elizabeth to the Protectorate of Cromwell into two unequal portions, the first ending with the death of James I. the other comprehending the reign of Charles and the brief glories of the Republic, we are forcibly struck with a difference in the character of the illustrious actors, by whom each period is rendered severally memorable. Or rather, the difference in the characters of the great men in each period, leads us to make this division. Eminent as the intellectual powers were that were displayed in both; yet in the number of great men, in the various sorts of excellence, and not merely in the variety but almost diversity of talents united in the same individual, the age of Charles falls short of its predecessor; and the stars of the Parliament, keen as their radiance was, in fulness and richness of lustre, yield to the constellation at the court of Elizabeth;—which can only be paralleled by Greece in her brightest moment, when the titles of the poet, the philosopher, the historian, the statesman and the general not seldom formed a garland round the same head, as in the instances of our Sidneys and Raleighs. But then, on the other hand, there was a vehemence of will, an enthusiasm of principle, a depth and an earnestness of spirit, which the charms of individual fame and personal aggrandisement could not pacify,—an aspiration after reality, permanence, and general good,—in short, a moral grandeur in the latter period, with which the low intrigues, Machiavellic maxims, and selfish and servile ambition of the former, stand in painful contrast.

The causes of this it belongs not to the present occasion to detail at length; but a mere allusion to the quick succession of revolutions in religion, breeding a political indifference in the mass of men to religion itself, the enormous increase of the royal power in consequence of the humiliation of the nobility and the clergy—the transference of the papal authority to the crown,—the unfixed state of Elizabeth's own opinions, whose inclinations were as popish as her interests were protestant—the controversial extravagance and practical imbecility of her successor—

will help to explain the former period; and the persecutions that had given a life-and-soul-interest to the disputes so imprudently fostered by James,—the ardour of a conscious increase of power in the Commons, and the greater austerity of manners and maxims, the natural product and most formidable weapon of religious disputation, not merely in conjunction, but in closest combination, with newly awakened political and republican zeal, these perhaps account for the character of the latter æra.

In the close of the former period, and during the bloom of the latter, the poet Milton was educated and formed; and he survived the latter, and all the fond hopes and aspirations which had been its life; and so in evil days, standing as the representative of the combined excellence of both periods, he produced the Paradise Lost as by an after-throe of nature. "There are some persons," (observes a divine, a contemporary of Milton's) "of whom the grace of God takes early hold, and the good spirit inhabiting them, carries them on in an even constancy through innocence into virtue, their Christianity bearing equal date with their manhood, and reason and religion, like warp and woof, running together, make up one web of a wise and exemplary life. This (he adds) is a most happy case, wherever it happens; for, besides that there is no sweeter or more lovely thing on earth than the early buds of piety, which drew from our Saviour signal affection to the beloved disciple, it is better to have no wound than to experience the most sovereign balsam, which, if it work a cure, yet usually leaves a scar behind." Although it was and is my intention to defer the consideration of Milton's own character to the conclusion of this Lecture, yet I could not prevail on myself to approach the Paradise Lost without impressing on your minds the conditions under which such a work was in fact producible at all, the original genius having been assumed as the immediate agent and efficient cause; and these conditions I find in the character of the times and in his own character. The age in which the foundations of his mind were laid, was congenial to it as one golden æra of profound erudition and individual genius; —that in which the superstructure was carried up, was no less favourable to it by a sternness of discipline and a show of self-control, highly flattering to the imaginative dignity

of an heir of fame, and which won Milton over from the dear-loved delights of academic groves and cathedral aisles to the anti-prelatic party. It acted on him, too, no doubt, and modified his studies by a characteristic controversial spirit, (his presentation of God is tinted with it)—a spirit not less busy indeed in political than in theological and ecclesiastical dispute, but carrying on the former almost always, more or less, in the guise of the latter. And so far as Pope's censure [1] of our poet,—that he makes God the Father a school divine—is just, we must attribute it to the character of his age, from which the men of genius, who escaped, escaped by a worse disease, the licentious indifference of a Frenchified court.

Such was the *nidus* or soil, which constituted, in the strict sense of the word, the circumstances of Milton's mind. In his mind itself there were purity and piety absolute; an imagination to which neither the past nor the present were interesting, except as far as they called forth and enlivened the great ideal, in which and for which he lived; a keen love of truth, which, after many weary pursuits, found a harbour in a sublime listening to the still voice in his own spirit, and as keen a love of his country, which, after a disappointment still more depressive, expanded and soared into a love of man as a probationer of immortality. These were, these alone could be, the conditions under which such a work as the Paradise Lost could be conceived and accomplished. By a life-long study Milton had known—

> What was of use to know,
> What best to say could say, to do had done.
> His actions to his words agreed, his words
> To his large heart gave utterance due, his heart
> Contain'd of good, wise, fair, the perfect shape;

and he left the imperishable total, as a bequest to the ages coming, in the PARADISE LOST.[2]

Difficult as I shall find it to turn over these leaves without catching some passage, which would tempt me to stop, I propose to consider, 1st, the general plan and arrangement of the work;—2ndly, the subject with its difficulties and

[1] Table Talk, vol. ii. p. 264.

[2] Here Mr. C. notes: "Not perhaps here, but towards, or as, the conclusion, to chastise the fashionable notion that poetry is a relaxation or amusement, one of the superfluous toys and luxuries of the intellect! To contrast the permanence of poems with the transiency and fleeting moral effects of empires, and what are called, great events." *Ed.*

advantages;—3rdly, the poet's object, the spirit in the letter, the ἐνθύμιον ἐν μύθῳ, the true school-divinity; and lastly, the characteristic excellencies of the poem, in what they consist, and by what means they were produced.

1. As to the plan and ordonnance of the Poem.

Compare it with the Iliad, many of the books of which might change places without any injury to the thread of the story. Indeed, I doubt the original existence of the Iliad as one poem; it seems more probable that it was put together about the time of the Pisistratidæ. The Iliad—and, more or less, all epic poems, the subjects of which are taken from history—have no rounded conclusion; they remain, after all, but single chapters from the volume of history, although they are ornamental chapters. Consider the exquisite simplicity of the Paradise Lost. It and it alone really possesses a beginning, a middle, and an end; it has the totality of the poem as distinguished from the *ab ovo* birth and parentage, or straight line, of history.

2. As to the subject.

In Homer, the supposed importance of the subject, as the first effort of confederated Greece, is an after-thought of the critics; and the interest, such as it is, derived from the events themselves, as distinguished from the manner of representing them, is very languid to all but Greeks. It is a Greek poem. The superiority of the Paradise Lost is obvious in this respect, that the interest transcends the limits of a nation. But we do not generally dwell on this excellence of the Paradise Lost, because it seems attributable to Christianity itself;—yet in fact the interest is wider than Christendom, and comprehends the Jewish and Mohammedan worlds;—nay, still further, inasmuch as it represents the origin of evil, and the combat of evil and good, it contains matter of deep interest to all mankind, as forming the basis of all religion, and the true occasion of all philosophy whatsoever.

The FALL of man is the subject; Satan is the cause; man's blissful state the immediate object of his enmity and attack; man is warned by an angel who gives him an account of all that was requisite to be known, to make the warning at once intelligible and awful, then the temptation ensues, and the Fall; then the immediate sensible consequence; then the consolation, wherein an angel presents a vision of the history of men with the ultimate triumph

of the Redeemer. Nothing is touched in this vision but what is of general interest in religion; any thing else would have been improper.

The inferiority of Klopstock's Messiah is inexpressible. I admit the prerogative of poetic feeling, and poetic faith; but I cannot suspend the judgment even for a moment. A poem may in one sense be a dream, but it must be a waking dream. In Milton you have a religious faith combined with the moral nature; it is an efflux; you go along with it. In Klopstock there is a wilfulness; he makes things so and so. The feigned speeches and events in the Messiah shock us like falsehoods; but nothing of that sort is felt in the Paradise Lost, in which no particulars, at least very few indeed, are touched which can come into collision or juxta-position with recorded matter.

But notwithstanding the advantages in Milton's subject, there were concomitant insuperable difficulties, and Milton has exhibited marvellous skill in keeping most of them out of sight. High poetry is the translation of reality into the ideal under the predicament of succession of time only. The poet is an historian, upon condition of moral power being the only force in the universe. The very grandeur of his subject ministered a difficulty to Milton. The statement of a being of high intellect, warring against the supreme Being, seems to contradict the idea of a supreme Being. Milton precludes our feeling this, as much as possible, by keeping the peculiar attributes of divinity less in sight, making them to a certain extent allegorical only. Again poetry implies the language of excitement; yet how to reconcile such language with God! Hence Milton confines the poetic passion in God's speeches to the language of scripture; and once only allows the *passio vera*, or *quasi humana* to appear, in the passage, where the Father contemplates his own likeness in the Son before the battle:—

> Go then, thou Mightiest, in thy Father's might,
> Ascend my chariot, guide the rapid wheels
> That shake Heaven's basis, bring forth all my war,
> My bow and thunder; my almighty arms
> Gird on, and sword upon thy puissant thigh;
> Pursue these sons of darkness, drive them out
> From all Heaven's bounds into the utter deep.
> There let them learn, as likes them, to despise
> God and Messiah his anointed king.
>
> B. VI. v. 710.

3. As to Milton's object:

It was to justify the ways of God to man! The controversial spirit observable in many parts of the poem, especially in God's speeches, is immediately attributable to the great controversy of that age, the origination of evil. The Arminians considered it a mere calamity. The Calvinists took away all human will. Milton asserted the will, but declared for the enslavement of the will out of an act of the will itself. There are three powers in us, which distinguish us from the beasts that perish;—1, reason; 2, the power of viewing universal truth; and 3, the power of contracting universal truth into particulars. Religion is the will in the reason, and love in the will.

The character of Satan is pride and sensual indulgence, finding in self the sole motive of action. It is the character so often seen *in little* on the political stage. It exhibits all the restlessness, temerity, and cunning which have marked the mighty hunters of mankind from Nimrod to Napoleon. The common fascination of men is, that these great men, as they are called, must act from some great motive. Milton has carefully marked in his Satan the intense selfishness, the alcohol of egotism, which would rather reign in hell than serve in heaven. To place this lust of self in opposition to denial of self or duty, and to show what exertions it would make, and what pains endure to accomplish its end, is Milton's particular object in the character of Satan. But around this character he has thrown a singularity of daring, a grandeur of sufferance, and a ruined splendour, which constitute the very height of poetic sublimity.

Lastly, as to the execution:—

The language and versification of the Paradise Lost are peculiar in being so much more necessarily correspondent to each than those in any other poem or poet. The connexion of the sentences and the position of the words are exquisitely artificial; but the position is rather according to the logic of passion or universal logic, than to the logic of grammar. Milton attempted to make the English language obey the logic of passion, as perfectly as the Greek and Latin. Hence the occasional harshness in the construction.

Sublimity is the pre-eminent characteristic of the Paradise Lost. It is not an arithmetical sublime like

Klopstock's, whose rule always is to treat what we might think large as contemptibly small. Klopstock mistakes bigness for greatness. There is a greatness arising from images of effort and daring, and also from those of moral endurance; in Milton both are united. The fallen angels are human passions, invested with a dramatic reality.

The apostrophe to light at the commencement of the third book is particularly beautiful as an intermediate link between Hell and Heaven; and observe, how the second and third book support the subjective character of the poem. In all modern poetry in Christendom there is an under consciousness of a sinful nature, a fleeting away of external things, the mind or subject greater than the object, the reflective character predominant. In the Paradise Lost the sublimest parts are the revelations of Milton's own mind, producing itself and evolving its own greatness; and this is so truly so, that when that which is merely entertaining for its objective beauty is introduced, it at first seems a discord.

In the description of Paradise itself, you have Milton's sunny side as a man; here his descriptive powers are exercised to the utmost, and he draws deep upon his Italian resources. In the description of Eve, and throughout this part of the poem, the poet is predominant over the theologian. Dress is the symbol of the Fall, but the mark of intellect; and the metaphysics of dress are, the hiding what is not symbolic and displaying by discrimination what is. The love of Adam and Eve in Paradise is of the highest merit—not phantomatic, and yet removed from every thing degrading. It is the sentiment of one rational being towards another made tender by a specific difference in that which is essentially the same in both; it is a union of opposites, a giving and receiving mutually of the permanent in either, a completion of each in the other.

Milton is not a picturesque, but a musical, poet; although he has this merit, that the object chosen by him for any particular foreground always remains prominent to the end, enriched, but not incumbered, by the opulence of descriptive details furnished by an exhaustless imagination. I wish the Paradise Lost were more carefully read and studied than I can see any ground for believing it is, especially those parts which, from the habit of always looking for a story in poetry, are scarcely read at all,—as

for example, Adam's vision of future events in the 11th and 12th books. No one can rise from the perusal of this immortal poem without a deep sense of the grandeur and the purity of Milton's soul, or without feeling how susceptible of domestic enjoyments he really was, notwithstanding the discomforts which actually resulted from an apparently unhappy choice in marriage. He was, as every truly great poet has ever been, a good man; but finding it impossible to realize his own aspirations, either in religion or politics, or society, he gave up his heart to the living spirit and light within him, and avenged himself on the world by enriching it with this record of his own transcendant ideal.

Notes on Milton. 1807.[1]

(Hayley quotes the following passage :—)

"Time serves not now, and, perhaps, I might seem too profuse to give any certain account of what the mind at home, in the spacious circuit of her musing, hath liberty to propose to herself though of highest hope and hardest attempting; whether that epic form, whereof the two poems of Homer, and those other two of Virgil and Tasso, are a diffuse, and *the book of Job a brief, model*" p. 69.

These latter words deserve particular notice. I do not doubt that Milton intended his Paradise Lost as an epic of the first class, and that the poetic dialogue of the Book of Job was his model for the general scheme of his Paradise Regained. Readers would not be disappointed in the latter poem, if they proceeded to a perusal of it with a proper preconception of the kind of interest intended to be excited in that admirable work. In its kind it is the most perfect poem extant, though its kind may be inferior in interest—being in its essence didactic—to that other sort in which instruction is conveyed more effectively, because less directly, in connection with stronger and more pleasurable emotions, and thereby in a closer affinity with action. But might we not as rationally object to an accomplished woman's conversing, however agreeably, because it has happened that we have received a keener pleasure from her singing to the harp? *Si genus spectabo et*

[1] These notes were written by Mr. Coleridge in a copy of Hayley's Life of Milton, (4to. 1796), belonging to Mr. Poole. By him they were communicated, and this seems the fittest place for their publication. *Ed.*

sapienti viro haud indignum, et si poema sit in suo genere perfectum, satis est. Quod si hoc auctor idem altioribus numeris et carmini diviniori ipsum per se divinum superaddiderit, mehercule satis est, et plusquam satis. I cannot, however, but wish that the answer of Jesus to Satan in the 4th book (v. 285)—

> Think not but that I know these things; or think
> I know them not, not therefore am I short
> Of knowing what I ought, &c.

had breathed the spirit of Hayley's noble quotation rather than the narrow bigotry of Gregory the Great. The passage is, indeed, excellent, and is partially true; but partial truth is the worst mode of conveying falsehood.

Hayley, p. 75. "The sincerest friends of Milton may here agree with Johnson, who speaks of *his controversial merriment as disgusting*."

The man who reads a work meant for immediate effect on one age with the notions and feelings of another, may be a refined gentleman, but must be a sorry critic. He who possesses imagination enough to live with his forefathers, and, leaving comparative reflection for an after moment, to give himself up during the first perusal to the feelings of a contemporary, if not a partizan, will, I dare aver, rarely find any part of Milton's prose works disgusting.

(Hayley, p. 104 Hayley is speaking of the passage in Milton's Answer to Icon Basilice, in which he accuses Charles of taking his Prayer in captivity from Pamela's prayer in the 3rd book of Sidney's Arcadia. The passage begins,—

"But this king, not content with that which, although in a thing holy, is no holy theft, to attribute to his own making other men's whole prayers," &c. Symmons' ed. 1806, p. 407.)

Assuredly, I regret that Milton should have written this passage; and yet the adoption of a prayer from a romance on such an occasion does not evince a delicate or deeply sincere mind. We are the creatures of association. There are some excellent moral and even serious lines in Hudibras, but what if a clergyman should adorn his sermon with a quotation from that poem! Would the abstract propriety of the verses leave him "honourably acquitted?" The Christian baptism of a line in Virgil is so far from being

a parallel, that it is ridiculously inappropriate,—an absurdity as glaring as that of the bigoted Puritans, who objected to some of the noblest and most scriptural prayers ever dictated by wisdom and piety, simply because the Roman Catholics had used them.

Hayley, p. 107. "The ambition of Milton," &c.

I do not approve the so frequent use of this word relatively to Milton. Indeed the fondness for ingrafting a good sense on the word "ambition," is not a Christian impulse in general.

Hayley, p. 110. "Milton himself seems to have thought it allowable in literary contention to vilify, &c. the character of an opponent; but surely this doctrine is unworthy," &c.

If ever it were allowable, in this case it was especially so. But these general observations, without meditation on the particular times and the genius of the times, are most often as unjust as they are always superficial.

(Hayley, p. 133. Hayley is speaking of Milton's panegyric on Cromwell's government :—)

Besides, however Milton might and did regret the immediate necessity, yet what alternative was there? Was it not better that Cromwell should usurp power, to protect religious freedom at least, than that the Presbyterians should usurp it to introduce a religious persecution,—extending the notion of spiritual concerns so far as to leave no freedom even to a man's bedchamber?

(Hayley, p. 250. Hayley's conjectures on the origin of the Paradise Lost :—)

If Milton borrowed a hint from any writer, it was more probably from Strada's Prolusions, in which the Fall of the Angels is pointed out as the noblest subject for a Christian poet.[1] The more dissimilar the detailed images are, the more likely it is that a great genius should catch the general idea.

(Hayl. p. 294. Extracts from the Adamo of Andreini :)

"Lucifero. Che dal mio centro oscuro
Mi chiama a rimirar cotanta luce?

[1] The reference seems generally to be to the 5th Prolusion of the 1st Book. *Hic arcus hac tela, quibus olim in magno illo Superum tumultu princeps armorum Michael confixit auctorem proditionis; hic fulmina humanæ mentis terror * * * *. In nubibus armatas bello legiones instruam, atque inde pro re nata auxiliares ad terram copias evocabo * * * * *. Hic mihi Cælites, quos esse ferunt elementorum tutelares, prima illa corpora miscebunt. Sect.* 4. Ed.

Who from my dark abyss
Calls me to gaze on this *excess of light?*"

The words in italics are an unfair translation. They may suggest that Milton really had read and did imitate this drama. The original is 'in so great light.' Indeed the whole version is affectedly and inaccurately Miltonic.

Ib. v. 11. Che di fango opre festi—
Forming thy works of *dust* (no, dirt.—)

Ib. v. 17. Tessa pur stella a stella,
E V' aggiunga e luna, e sole.—

Let him unite above
Star upon star, moon, sun.

Let him weave star to star,
Then join both moon and sun!

Ib. v. 21. Ch 'al fin con biasmo e scorno
Vana l'opra sarà, vano il sudore!

Since in the end division
Shall prove his works and all his efforts vain.

Since finally with censure and disdain
Vain shall the work be, and his toil be vain!

1796.[1]

The reader of Milton must be always on his duty: he is surrounded with sense; it rises in every line; every word is to the purpose. There are no lazy intervals; all has been considered, and demands and merits observation. If this be called obscurity, let it be remembered that it is such an obscurity as is a compliment to the reader; not that vicious obscurity which proceeds from a muddled head.

LECTURE XI.[2]

Asiatic and Greek Mythologies—Robinson Crusoe—Use of works of Imagination in Education.

A CONFOUNDING of God with Nature, and an incapacity of finding unity in the manifold and infinity in the individual, —these are the origin of polytheism. The most perfect

[1] From a common-place book of Mr. C.'s, communicated by Mr. J. M. Gutch *Ed.*
[2] Partly from Mr. Green's note. *Ed.*

instance of this kind of theism is that of early Greece; other nations seem to have either transcended, or come short of, the old Hellenic standard,—a mythology in itself fundamentally allegorical, and typical of the powers and functions of nature, but subsequently mixed up with a deification of great men and hero-worship,—so that finally the original idea became inextricably combined with the form and attributes of some legendary individual. In Asia, probably from the greater unity of the government and the still surviving influence of patriarchal tradition, the idea of the unity of God, in a distorted reflection of the Mosaic scheme, was much more generally preserved; and accordingly all other super or ultra-human beings could only be represented as ministers of, or rebels against, his will. The Asiatic genii and fairies are, therefore, always endowed with moral qualities, and distinguishable as malignant or benevolent to man. It is this uniform attribution of fixed moral qualities to the supernatural agents of eastern mythology that particularly separates them from the divinities of old Greece.

Yet it is not altogether improbable that in the Samothracian or Cabeiric mysteries the link between the Asiatic and Greek popular schemes of mythology lay concealed. Of these mysteries there are conflicting accounts, and, perhaps, there were variations of doctrine in the lapse of ages and intercourse with other systems. But, upon a review of all that is left to us on this subject in the writings of the ancients, we may, I think, make out thus much of an interesting fact,—that *Cabiri*, impliedly at least, meant *socii, complices*, having a hypostatic or fundamental union with, or relation to, each other; that these mysterious divinities were, ultimately at least, divided into a higher and lower triad; that the lower triad, *primi quia infimi*, consisted of the old Titanic deities or powers of nature, under the obscure names of *Axieros*, *Axiokersos*, and *Axiokersa*, representing symbolically different modifications of animal desire or material action, such as hunger, thirst, and fire, without consciousness; that the higher triad, *ultimi quia superiores*, consisted of Jupiter (Pallas, or Apollo, or Bacchus, or Mercury, mystically called *Cadmilos*) and Venus, representing, as before, the νοῦς or reason, the λόγος or word or communicative power, and the ἵμως or love;—that the *Cadmilos* or Mercury, the mani-

fested, communicated, or sent, appeared not only in his proper person as second of the higher triad, but also as a mediator between the higher and lower triad, and so there were seven divinities; and, indeed, according to some authorities, it might seem that the *Cadmilos* acted once as a mediator of the higher, and once of the lower, triad, and that so there were eight Cabeiric divinities. The lower or Titanic powers being subdued, chaos ceased, and creation began in the reign of the divinities of mind and love; but the chaotic gods still existed in the abyss, and the notion of evoking them was the origin, the idea, of the Greek necromancy.

These mysteries, like all the others, were certainly in connection with either the Phœnician or Egyptian systems, perhaps with both. Hence the old Cabeiric powers were soon made to answer to the corresponding popular divinities; and the lower triad was called by the uninitiated, Ceres, Vulcan or Pluto, and Proserpine, and the *Cadmilos* became Mercury. It is not without ground that I direct your attention, under these circumstances, to the probable derivation of some portion of this most remarkable system from patriarchal tradition, and to the connection of the Cabeiri with the Kabbala.

The Samothracian mysteries continued in celebrity till some time after the commencement of the Christian era.[1] But they gradually sank with the rest of the ancient system of mythology, to which, in fact, they did not properly belong. The peculiar doctrines, however, were preserved in the memories of the initiated, and handed down by individuals. No doubt they were propagated in Europe, and it is not improbable that Paracelsus received many of his opinions from such persons, and I think a connection may be traced between him and Jacob Behmen.

The Asiatic supernatural beings are all produced by imagining an excessive magnitude, or an excessive smallness combined with great power; and the broken associations, which must have given rise to such conceptions, are the sources of the interest which they inspire, as exhibiting, through the working of the imagination, the idea of power in the will. This is delightfully exemplified in the Arabian

[1] In the reign of Tiberius, A.D. 18, Germanicus attempted to visit Samothrace;—*illum in regressu sacra Samothracum visere nitentem obvii aquilones depulere.* Tacit. Ann. II. c. 54. *Ed.*

Nights' Entertainments, and indeed, more or less, in other works of the same kind. In all these there is the same activity of mind as in dreaming, that is—an exertion of the fancy in the combination and recombination of familiar objects so as to produce novel and wonderful imagery. To this must be added that these tales cause no deep feeling of a moral kind—whether of religion or love; but an impulse of motion is communicated to the mind without excitement, and this is the reason of their being so generally read and admired.

I think it not unlikely that the Milesian Tales contained the germs of many of those now in the Arabian Nights; indeed it is scarcely possible to doubt that the Greek Empire must have left deep impression on the Persian intellect. So also many of the Roman Catholic legends are taken from Apuleius. In that exquisite story of Cupid and Psyche, the allegory is of no injury to the dramatic vividness of the tale. It is evidently a philosophic attempt to parry Christianity with a *quasi*-Platonic account of the fall and redemption of the soul.

The charm of De Foe's works, especially of Robinson Crusoe, is founded on the same principle. It always interests, never agitates. Crusoe himself is merely a representative of humanity in general; neither his intellectual nor his moral qualities set him above the middle degree of mankind; his only prominent characteristic is the spirit of enterprise and wandering, which is, nevertheless, a very common disposition. You will observe that all that is wonderful in this tale is the result of external circumstances—of things which fortune brings to Crusoe's hand.

NOTES ON ROBINSON CRUSOE.[1]

Vol. i. p. 17. But my ill fate pushed me on now with an obstinacy that nothing could resist; and though I had several times loud calls from my reason, and my more composed judgment, to go home, yet I had no power to do it. I know not what to call this, nor will I urge that it is a secret over-ruling decree that hurries us on to be the instruments of our own destruction, even though it be before us, and that we rush upon it with our eyes open.

The wise only possess ideas; the greater part of mankind are possessed by them. Robinson Crusoe was not

[1] These notes were written by Mr. C. in Mr. Gillman's copy of Robinson Crusoe, in the summer of 1830. The references in the text are to Major's edition, 1831. *Ed.*

conscious of the master impulse, even because it was his master, and had taken, as he says, full possession of him. When once the mind, in despite of the remonstrating conscience, has abandoned its free power to a haunting impulse or idea, then whatever tends to give depth and vividness to this idea or indefinite imagination, increases its despotism, and in the same proportion renders the reason and free will ineffectual. Now, fearful calamities, sufferings, horrors, and hair-breadth escapes will have this effect, far more than even sensual pleasure and prosperous incidents. Hence the evil consequences of sin in such cases, instead of retracting or deterring the sinner, goad him on to his destruction. This is the moral of Shakspeare's Macbeth, and the true solution of this paragraph, —not any overruling decree of divine wrath, but the tyranny of the sinner's own evil imagination, which he has voluntarily chosen as his master.

Compare the contemptuous Swift with the contemned De Foe, and how superior will the latter be found! But by what test?—Even by this; that the writer who makes me sympathize with his presentations with the whole of my being, is more estimable than he who calls forth, and appeals but to, a part of my being—my sense of the ludicrous, for instance. De Foe's excellence it is, to make me forget my specific class, character, and circumstances, and to raise me while I read him, into the universal man.

P. 80. I smiled to myself at the sight of this money. "O drug!" said I aloud, &c. *However upon second thoughts, I took it away;* and wrapping all this in a piece of canvas, &c.

Worthy of Shakspeare!—and yet the simple semicolon after it, the instant passing on without the least pause of reflex consciousness, is more exquisite and masterlike than the touch itself. A meaner writer, a Marmontel, would have put an (!) after '*away*,' and have commenced a fresh paragraph. 30th July, 1830.

P. 111. And I must confess, my religious thankfulness to God's providence began to abate too, upon the discovering that all this was nothing but what was common; though I ought to have been as thankful for so strange and unforeseen a providence, as if it had been miraculous.

To make men feel the truth of this is one characteristic object of the miracles worked by Moses;—in them the providence is miraculous, the miracles providential.

P. 126. The growing up of the corn, as is hinted in my Journal, had, at first, some little influence upon me, and began to affect me with seriousness, as long as I thought it had something miraculous in it, &c.

By far the ablest vindication of miracles which I have met with. It is indeed the true ground, the proper purpose and intention of a miracle.

P. 141. To think that this was all my own, that I was king and lord of all this country indefeasibly, &c.

By the by, what is the law of England respecting this? Suppose I had discovered, or been wrecked on an uninhabited island, would it be mine or the king's?

P. 223. I considered—that as I could not foresee what the ends of divine wisdom might be in all this, so I was not to dispute his sovereignty, who, as I was his creature, had an undoubted right, by creation, to govern and dispose of me absolutely as he thought fit, &c.

I could never understand this reasoning, grounded on a complete misapprehension of St. Paul's image of the potter, Rom. ix., or rather I do fully understand the absurdity of it. The susceptibility of pain and pleasure, of good and evil, constitutes a right in every creature endowed therewith in relation to every rational and moral being,—*a fortiori* therefore, to the Supreme Reason, to the absolutely good Being. Remember Davenant's verses;—

> Doth it our reason's mutinies appease
> To say, the potter may his own clay mould
> To every use, or in what shape he please,
> At first not counsell'd, nor at last controll'd?
>
> Power's hand can neither easy be, nor strict
> To lifeless clay, which ease nor torment knows,
> And where it cannot favour or afflict,
> It neither justice or injustice shows.
>
> But souls have life, and life eternal too:
> Therefore if doom'd before they can offend,
> It seems to show what heavenly power can do,
> But does not in that deed that power commend.
>
> Death of Astragon, st. 88, &c.

P. 232-3. And this I must observe with grief too, that the discomposure of my mind had too great impressions also upon the religious parts of my thoughts,—praying to God being properly an act of the mind, not of the body.

As justly conceived as it is beautifully expressed. And

a mighty motive for habitual prayer; for this cannot but greatly facilitate the performance of rational prayer even in moments of urgent distress.

P. 244. That this would justify the conduct of the Spaniards in all their barbarities practised in America.

De Foe was a true philanthropist, who had risen above the antipathies of nationality; but he was evidently partial to the Spanish character, which, however, it is not, I fear, possible to acquit of cruelty. Witness the Netherlands, the Inquisition, the late Guerilla warfare, &c.

P. 249. That I shall not discuss, and perhaps cannot account for; but certainly they are a proof of the converse of spirits, &c.

This reminds me of a conversation I once overheard. "How a statement so injurious to Mr. A. and so contrary to the truth, should have been made to you by Mr. B. I do not pretend to account for;—only I know of my own knowledge that B. is an inveterate liar, and has long borne malice against Mr. A.; and I can prove that he has repeatedly declared that in some way or other he would do Mr. A. a mischief."

P 254. The place I was in was a most delightful cavity or grotto of its kind, as could be expected, though perfectly dark: the floor was dry and level, and had a sort of small loose gravel on it, &c.

How accurate an observer of nature De Foe was! The reader will at once recognise Professor Buckland's caves and the diluvial gravel.

P. 308. I entered into a long discourse with him about the devil, the original of him, his rebellion against God, his enmity to man, the reason of it, his setting himself up in the dark parts of the world to be worshipped instead of God, &c.

I presume that Milton's Paradise Lost must have been bound up with one of Crusoe's Bibles; otherwise I should be puzzled to know where he found all this history of the Old Gentleman. Not a word of it in the Bible itself, I am quite sure. But to be serious. De Foe did not reflect that all these difficulties are attached to a mere fiction, or, at the best, an allegory, supported by a few popular phrases and figures of speech used incidentally or dramatically by the Evangelists,—and that the existence of a personal, intelligent, evil being, the counterpart and

antagonist of God, is in direct contradiction to the most express declarations of Holy Writ. "*Shall there be evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done it?*" Amos iii. 6. "*I make peace and create evil.*" Isa. xlv. 7. This is the deep mystery of the abyss of God.

Vol. ii. p. 3. I have often heard persons of good judgment say, * * * that there is no such thing as a spirit appearing, a ghost walking, and the like, &c.

I cannot conceive a better definition of Body than "spirit appearing," or of a flesh-and-blood man than a rational spirit apparent. But a spirit *per se* appearing is tantamount to a spirit appearing without its appearances. And as for ghosts, it is enough for a man of common sense to observe, that a ghost and a shadow are concluded in the same definition, that is, visibility without tangibility.

P. 9. She was, in a few words, the stay of all my affairs, the centre of all my enterprises, &c.

The stay of his affairs, the centre of his interests, the regulator of his schemes and movements, whom it soothed his pride to submit to, and in complying with whose wishes the conscious sensation of his acting will increased the impulse, while it disguised the coercion, of duty!—the clinging dependent, yet the strong supporter—the comforter, the comfort, and the soul's living home! This is De Foe's comprehensive character of the wife, as she should be; and, to the honour of womanhood be it spoken, there are few neighbourhoods in which one name at least might not be found for the portrait.

The exquisite paragraphs in this and the next page, in addition to others scattered, though with a sparing hand, through his novels, afford sufficient proof that De Foe was a first-rate master of periodic style; but with sound judgment, and the fine tact of genius, he has avoided it as adverse to, nay, incompatible with, the every-day matter of fact realness, which forms the charm and the character of all his romances. The Robinson Crusoe is like the vision of a happy night-mair, such as a denizen of Elysium might be supposed to have from a little excess in his nectar and ambrosia supper. Our imagination is kept in full play, excited to the highest; yet all the while we are touching, or touched by, common flesh and blood.

P. 67. The ungrateful creatures began to be as insolent and troublesome as before, &c.

How should it be otherwise? They were idle; and when we will not sow corn, the devil will be sure to sow weeds, night-shade, henbane, and devil's bit.

P. 82. That hardened villain was so far from denying it, that he said it was true, and ——— him they would do it still before they had done with them.

Observe when a man has once abandoned himself to wickedness, he cannot stop, and does not join the devils till he has become a devil himself. Rebelling against his conscience he becomes the slave of his own furious will.

One excellence of De Foe, amongst many, is his sacrifice of lesser interest to the greater because more universal. Had he (as without any improbability he might have done) given his Robinson Crusoe any of the turn for natural history, which forms so striking and delightful a feature in the equally uneducated Dampier;—had he made him find out qualities and uses in the before (to him) unknown plants of the island, discover, for instance, a substitute for hops, or describe birds, &c.—many delightful pages and incidents might have enriched the book;—but then Crusoe would have ceased to be the universal representative, the person for whom every reader could substitute himself. But now nothing is done, thought, suffered, or desired, but what every man can imagine himself doing, thinking, feeling, or wishing for. Even so very easy a problem as that of finding a substitute for ink, is with exquisite judgment made to baffle Crusoe's inventive faculties. And in what he does, he arrives at no excellence; he does not make basket work like Will Atkins; the carpentering, tailoring, pottery, &c. are all just what will answer his purposes, and those are confined to needs that all men have, and comforts that all men desire. Crusoe rises only to the point to which all men may be made to feel that they might, and that they ought to, rise in religion,—to resignation, dependence on, and thankful acknowledgment of, the divine mercy and goodness.

In the education of children, love is first to be instilled, and out of love obedience is to be educed. Then impulse

and power should be given to the intellect, and the ends of a moral being be exhibited. For this object thus much is effected by works of imagination ;—that they carry the mind out of self, and show the possible of the good and the great in the human character. The height, whatever it may be, of the imaginative standard will do no harm ; we are commanded to imitate one who is inimitable. We should address ourselves to those faculties in a child's mind, which are first awakened by nature, and consequently first admit of cultivation, that is to say, the memory and the imagination.[1] The comparing power, the judgment, is not at that age active, and ought not to be forcibly excited, as is too frequently and mistakenly done in the modern systems of education, which can only lead to selfish views, debtor and creditor principles of virtue, and an inflated sense of merit. In the imagination of man exist the seeds of all moral and scientific improvement ; chemistry was first alchemy, and out of astrology sprang astronomy. In the childhood of those sciences the imagination opened a way, and furnished materials, on which the ratiocinative powers in a maturer state operated with success. The imagination is the distinguishing characteristic of man as a progressive being ; and I repeat that it ought to be carefully guided and strengthened as the indispensable means and instrument of continued amelioration and refinement. Men of genius and goodness are generally restless in their minds in the present, and this, because they are by a law of their nature unremittingly regarding themselves in the future, and contemplating the possible of moral and intellectual advance towards perfection. Thus we live by hope and faith ; thus we are for the most part able to realize what we will, and thus we accomplish the end of our being. The contemplation of futurity inspires humility of soul in our judgment of the present.

I think the memory of children cannot, in reason, be too much stored with the objects and facts of natural history. God opens the images of nature, like the leaves of a book, before the eyes of his creature, Man—and teaches him all

1 He (Sir W. Scott) "detested and despised the whole generation of modern children's books in which the attempt is made to convey accurate notions of scientific minutiæ, delighting cordially on the other hand in those of the preceding age, which addressing themselves chiefly to the *imagination* obtain *through it*, as he believed, the best chance of stirring our graver faculties also." —*Life of Scott.*

that is grand and beautiful in the foaming cataract, the glassy lake, and the floating mist.

The common modern novel, in which there is no imagination, but a miserable struggle to excite and gratify mere curiosity, ought, in my judgment, to be wholly forbidden to children. Novel-reading of this sort is especially injurious to the growth of the imagination, the judgment, and the morals, especially to the latter, because it excites mere feelings without at the same time ministering an impulse to action. Women are good novelists, but indifferent poets; and this because they rarely or never thoroughly distinguish between fact and fiction. In the jumble of the two lies the secret of the modern novel, which is the *medium aliquid* between them, having just so much of fiction as to obscure the fact, and so much of fact as to render the fiction insipid. The perusal of a fashionable lady's novel, is to me very much like looking at the scenery and decorations of a theatre by broad daylight. The source of the common fondness for novels of this sort rests in that dislike of vacancy, and that love of sloth, which are inherent in the human mind; they afford excitement without producing reaction. By reaction I mean an activity of the intellectual faculties, which shows itself in consequent reasoning and observation, and originates action and conduct according to a principle. Thus, the act of thinking presents two sides for contemplation,—that of external causality, in which the train of thought may be considered as the result of outward impressions, of accidental combinations, of fancy, or the associations of the memory,—and on the other hand, that of internal causality, or of the energy of the will on the mind itself. Thought, therefore, might thus be regarded as passive or active; and the same faculties may in a popular sense be expressed as perception or observation, fancy or imagination, memory or recollection.

LECTURE XII.

Dreams—Apparitions—Alchemists—Personality of the Evil Being—Bodily Identity.

It is a general, but, as it appears to me, a mistaken opinion, that in our ordinary dreams we judge the objects to be real. I say our ordinary dreams;—because as to the night-mair

the opinion is to a considerable extent just. But the night-mair is not a mere dream, but takes place when the waking state of the brain is recommencing, and most often during a rapid alternation, a twinkling, as it were, of sleeping and waking ;—while either from pressure on, or from some derangement in, the stomach or other digestive organs acting on the external skin (which is still in sympathy with the stomach and bowels), and benumbing it, the sensations sent up to the brain by double touch (that is, when my own hand touches my side or breast) are so faint as to be merely equivalent to the sensation given by single touch, as when another person's hand touches me. The mind, therefore, which at all times, with and without our distinct consciousness, seeks for, and assumes, some outward cause for every impression from without, and which in sleep, by aid of the imaginative faculty, converts its judgments respecting the cause into a personal image as being the cause,—the mind, I say, in this case, deceived by past experience, attributes the painful sensation received to a correspondent agent,—an assassin, for instance, stabbing at the side, or a goblin sitting on the breast. Add too that the impressions of the bed, curtains, room, &c. received by the eyes in the half-moments of their opening, blend with, and give vividness and appropriate distance to, the dream image which returns when they close again ; and thus we unite the actual perceptions, or their immediate reliques, with the phantoms of the inward sense ; and in this manner so confound the half-waking, half-sleeping, reasoning power, that we actually do pass a positive judgment on the reality of what we see and hear, though often accompanied by doubt and self-questioning, which, as I have myself experienced, will at times become strong enough, even before we awake, to convince us that it is what it is—namely, the night-mair.

In ordinary dreams we do not judge the objects to be real ,—we simply do not determine that they are unreal. The sensations which they seem to produce, are in truth the causes and occasions of the images ; of which there are two obvious proofs : first, that in dreams the strangest and most sudden metamorphoses do not create any sensation of surprise : and the second, that as to the most dreadful images, which during the dream were accompanied with agonies of terror, we merely awake, or turn round on

the other side, and off fly both image and agony, which would be impossible if the sensations were produced by the images. This has always appeared to me an absolute demonstration of the true nature of ghosts and apparitions—such I mean of the tribe as were not pure inventions. Fifty years ago, (and to this day in the ruder parts of Great Britain and Ireland, in almost every kitchen and in too many parlours it is nearly the same,) you might meet persons who would assure you in the most solemn manner, so that you could not doubt their veracity at least, that they had seen an apparition of such and such a person,—in many cases, that the apparition had spoken to them; and they would describe themselves as having been in an agony of terror. They would tell you the story in perfect health. Now take the other class of facts, in which real ghosts have appeared;—I mean, where figures have been dressed up for the purpose of passing for apparitions: —in every instance I have known or heard of (and I have collected very many) the consequence has been either sudden death, or fits, or idiocy, or mania, or a brain fever. Whence comes the difference? evidently from this,—that in the one case the whole of the nervous system has been by slight internal causes gradually and all together brought into a certain state, the sensation of which is extravagantly exaggerated during sleep, and of which the images are the mere effects and exponents, as the motions of the weathercock are of the wind;—while in the other case, the image rushing through the senses upon a nervous system, wholly unprepared, actually causes the sensation, which is sometimes powerful enough to produce a total check, and almost always a lesion or inflammation. Who has not witnessed the difference in shock when we have leaped down half-a-dozen steps intentionally, and that of having missed a single stair? How comparatively severe the latter is! The fact really is, as to apparitions, that the terror produces the image instead of the contrary; for *in omnem actum perceptionis influit imaginatio*, as says Wolfe.

O, strange is the self-power of the imagination—when painful sensations have made it their interpreter, or returning gladsomeness or convalescence has made its chilled and evanished figures and landscape bud, blossom, and live in scarlet, green, and snowy white (like the fire-screen inscribed with the nitrate and muriate of cobalt,)—strange is

the power to represent the events and circumstances, even to the anguish or the triumph of the *quasi*-credent soul, while the necessary conditions, the only possible causes of such contingencies, are known to be in fact quite hopeless ; —yea, when the pure mind would recoil from the eve-lengthened shadow of an approaching hope, as from a crime :—and yet the effect shall have place, and substance, and living energy, and, on a blue islet of ether, in a whole sky of blackest cloudage, shine like a firstling of creation !

To return, however, to apparitions, and by way of an amusing illustration of the nature and value of even contemporary testimony upon such subjects, I will present you with a passage, literally translated by my friend, Mr. Southey, from the well known work of Bernal Dias, one of the companions of Cortez, in the conquest of Mexico :

Here it is that Gomara says, that Francisco de Morla rode forward on a dappled grey horse, before Cortes and the cavalry came up, and that the apostle St Iago, or St Peter was there I must say that all our works and victories are by the hand of our Lord Jesus Christ, and that in this battle there were for each of us so many Indians, that they could have covered us with handfuls of earth, if it had not been that the great mercy of God helped us in every thing And it may be that he of whom Gomara speaks, was the glorious Santiago or San Pedro, and I, as a sinner, was not worthy to see him ; but he whom I saw there and knew, was Francisco de Morla on a chesnut horse, who came up with Cortes And it seems to me that now while I am writing this, the whole war is represented before these sinful eyes, just in the manner as we then went through it. And though I, as an unworthy sinner, might not deserve to see either of these glorious apostles, there were in our company above four hundred soldiers and Cortes, and many other knights ; and it would have been talked of and testified, and they would have made a church when they peopled the town, which would have been called Santiago de la Vittoria, or San Pedro de la Vittoria, as it is now called, Santa Maria de la Vittoria. And if it was as Gomara says, bad Christians must we have been when our Lord God sent us his holy apostles, not to acknowledge his great mercy, and venerate his church daily. And would to God, it had been, as the Chronicler says !—but till I read his Chronicle, I never heard such a thing from any of the conquerors who were there.

Now, what if the odd accident of such a man as Bernal Dias' writing a history had not taken place ! Gomara's account, the account of a contemporary, which yet must have been read by scores who were present, would have remained uncontradicted. I remember the story of a man, whom the devil met and talked with, but left at a particular lane ;—the man followed him with his eyes, and when the

devil got to the turning or bend of the lane, he vanished! The devil was upon this occasion drest in a blue coat, plush waistcoat, leather breeches and boots, and talked and looked just like a common man, except as to a particular lock of hair which he had. "And how do you know then that it was the devil?" "How do I know," replied the fellow,—"why, if it had not been the devil, being drest as he was, and looking as he did, why should I have been sore stricken with fright when I first saw him? and why should I be in such a tremble all the while he talked? And, moreover, he had a particular sort of a kind of a look, and when I groaned and said, upon every question he asked me, Lord have mercy upon me! or, Christ have mercy upon me! it was plain enough that he did not like it, and so he left me!"—The man was quite sober when he related this story; but as it happened to him on his return from market, it is probable that he was then muddled. As for myself, I was actually seen in Newgate in the winter of 1798;—the person who saw me there, said he had asked my name of Mr. A. B. a known acquaintance of mine, who told him that it was young Coleridge, who had married the eldest Miss ——. "Will you go to Newgate, Sir?" said my friend; for I assure you that Mr. C. is now in Germany." "Very willingly," replied the other, and away they went to Newgate, and sent for A. B. "Coleridge," cried he, "in Newgate! God forbid!" I said, "young Col—— who married the eldest Miss ——." The names were something similar. And yet this person had himself really seen me at one of my lectures.

I remember, upon the occasion of my inhaling the nitrous oxide at the Royal Institution, about five minutes afterwards, a gentleman came from the other side of the theatre and said to me,—"Was it not ravishingly delightful, Sir?"—"It was highly pleasurable, no doubt."—"Was it not very like sweet music?"—"I cannot say I perceived any analogy to it."—"Did you not say it was very like Mrs. Billington singing by your ear!"—"No, Sir, I said that while I was breathing the gas, there was a singing in my ears."

To return, however, to dreams, I not only believe, for the reasons given, but have more than once actually experienced that the most fearful forms, when produced simply by association, instead of causing fear, operate no

other effect than the same would do if they had passed through my mind as thoughts, while I was composing a faery tale; the whole depending on the wise and gracious law in our nature, that the actual bodily sensations, called forth according to the law of association by thoughts and images of the mind, never greatly transcend the limits of pleasurable feeling in a tolerably healthy frame, unless when an act of the judgment supervenes and interprets them as purporting instant danger to ourselves.

[1] There have been very strange and incredible stories told of and by the alchemists. Perhaps in some of them there may have been a specific form of mania, originating in the constant intension of the mind on an imaginary end, associated with an immense variety of means, all of them substances not familiar to men in general, and in forms strange and unlike to those of ordinary nature. Sometimes, it seems as if the alchemists wrote like the Pythagoreans on music, imagining a metaphysical and inaudible music as the basis of the audible. It is clear that by sulphur they meant the solar rays or light, and by mercury the principle of ponderability, so that their theory was the same with that of the Heraclitic physics, or the modern German *Natur-philosophie*, which deduces all things from light and gravitation, each being bipolar; gravitation = north and south, or attraction and repulsion; light = east and west, or contraction and dilation; and gold being the tetrad, or interpenetration of both, as water was the dyad of light, and iron the dyad of gravitation.

It is, probably, unjust to accuse the alchemists generally of dabbling with attempts at magic in the common sense of the term. The supposed exercise of magical power always involved some moral guilt, directly or indirectly, as in stealing a piece of meat to lay on warts, touching humours with the hand of an executed person, &c. Rites of this sort and other practices of sorcery have always been regarded with trembling abhorrence by all nations, even the most ignorant, as by the Africans, the Hudson's Bay people and others. The alchemists were, no doubt, often considered as dealers in art magic, and many of them were not unwilling that such a belief should be prevalent; and the more earnest among them evidently looked at their association of substances, fumigations, and other chemical

[1] From Mr. Green's note.

operations as merely ceremonial, and seem, therefore, to have had a deeper meaning, that of evoking a latent power. It would be profitable to make a collection of all the cases of cures by magical charms and incantations; much useful information might, probably, be derived from it; for it is to be observed that such rites are the form in which medical knowledge would be preserved amongst a barbarous and ignorant people.

Note.[1] June, 1827.

The apocryphal book of Tobit consists of a very simple, but beautiful and interesting, family-memoir, into which some later Jewish poet or fabulist of Alexandria wove the ridiculous and frigid machinery, borrowed from the popular superstitions of the Greeks (though, probably, of Egyptian origin), and accommodated, clumsily enough, to the purer monotheism of the Mosaic law. The Rape of the Lock is another instance of a simple tale thus enlarged at a later period, though in this case by the same author, and with a very different result. Now unless Mr. Hillhouse is Romanist enough to receive this nursery-tale garnish of a domestic incident as grave history, and holy writ, (for which, even from learned Roman Catholics, he would gain more credit as a very obedient child of the Church than as a biblical critic,) he will find it no easy matter to support this assertion of his by the passages of Scripture here referred to, consistently with any sane interpretation of their import and purpose.

I. The Fallen Spirits.

This is the mythological form, or, if you will, the symbolical representation, of a profound idea necessary as the *præ-suppositum* of the Christian scheme, or a postulate of reason, indispensable, if we would render the existence of a world of finites compatible with the assumption of a super-mundane God, not one with the world. In short, this idea is the condition under which alone the reason of man can retain the doctrine of an infinite and absolute Being, and yet keep clear of pantheism as exhibited by Benedict Spinosa.

II. The Egyptian Magicians.

This whole narrative is probably a relic of the old

[1] Written in a copy of Mr. Hillhouse's Hadad. *Ed*

diplomatic *lingua-arcana*, or state-symbolique—in which the prediction of events is expressed as the immediate causing of them. Thus the prophet is said to destroy the city, the destruction of which he predicts. The word which our version renders by "*enchantments*" signifies "flames or burnings," by which it is probable that the Egyptians were able to deceive the spectators, and substitute serpents for staves. See Parkhurst *in voce*.

And with regard to the possessions in the Gospels, bear in mind first of all, that spirits are not necessarily souls or *I's* (*ich-heiten* or *self-consciousnesses*), and that the most ludicrous absurdities would follow from taking them as such in the Gospel instances; and secondly, that the Evangelist, who has recorded the most of these incidents, himself speaks of one of these possessed persons as a lunatic;—(σεληνιάζεται—ἐξῆλθεν ἀπ' αὐτοῦ τὸ δαιμόνιον. Matt. xvii. 15, 18) while St. John names them not at all, but seems to include them under the description of diseased or deranged persons. That madness may result from spiritual causes, and not only or principally from physical ailments, may readily be admitted. Is not our will itself a spiritual power? Is it not the spirit of the man? The mind of a rational and responsible being (that is, of a free-agent) is a spirit, though it does not follow that all spirits are minds. Who shall dare determine what spiritual influences may not arise out of the collective evil wills of wicked men? Even the bestial life, sinless in animals and their nature, may when awakened in the man and by his own act admitted into his will, become a spiritual influence. He receives a nature into his will, which by this very act becomes a corrupt will; and *vice versa*, this will becomes his nature, and thus a corrupt nature. This may be conceded; and this is all that the recorded words of our Saviour absolutely require in order to receive an appropriate sense; but this is altogether different from making spirits to be devils, and devils self-conscious individuals.

NOTES.[1] March, 1824.

A Christian's conflicts and conquests, p. 459. By the devil we are to understand that apostate spirit which fell from God, and is always designing to hale down others from God also. The Old Dragon (mentioned in the Revelation) with his tail drew down the third part of the stars of heaven and cast them to the earth.

How much it is to be regretted, that so enlightened and able a divine as Smith, had not philosophically and scripturally enucleated this so difficult yet important question,—respecting the personal existence of the evil principle; that is, whether as τὸ θεῖον of paganism is ὁ θεὸς in Christianity, so the τὸ πονηρὸν is to be ὁ πονηρὸς,—and whether this is an express doctrine of Christ, and not merely a Jewish dogma left undisturbed to fade away under the increasing light of the Gospel instead of assuming the former, and confirming the position by a verse from a poetic tissue of visual symbols,—a verse alien from the subject, and by which the Apocalypt enigmatized the Neronian persecutions and the apostasy through fear occasioned by it in a large number of converts.

Ib. p. 463. When we say, the devil is continually busy with us, I mean not only some apostate spirit as one particular being, but that spirit of apostasy which is lodged in all men's natures; and this may seem particularly to be aimed at in this place, if we observe the context:—as the scripture speaks of Christ not only as a particular person, but as a divine principle in holy souls.

Indeed the devil is not only the name of one particular thing, but a nature.

May I not venture to suspect that this was Smith's own belief and judgment? and that his conversion of the Satan, that is, *circuitor*, or minister of police (what our Sterne calls the accusing angel) in the prologue to Job into the devil was a mere condescension to the prevailing prejudice? Here, however, he speaks like himself, and like a true religious philosopher, who felt that the personality of evil spirits is a trifling question, compared with the personality of the evil principle. This is indeed most momentous.

[1] Written in a copy of "Select Discourses by John Smith, of Queen's College, Cambridge, 1660," and communicated by the Rev. Edward Coleridge. *Ed.*

NOTE ON A PASSAGE IN THE LIFE OF HENRY, EARL OF MORLAND. 20th June, 1827.

The defect of this and all similar theories that I am acquainted with, or rather, let me say, the desideratum, is the neglect of a previous definition of the term "body." What do you mean by it? The immediate grounds of a man's size, visibility, tangibility, &c. ?—But these are in a continual flux even as a column of smoke. The material particles of carbon, nitrogen, oxygen, hydrogen, lime, phosphorus, sulphur, soda, iron, that constitute the ponderable organism in May, 1827, at the moment of Pollio's death in his 70th year, have no better claim to be called his "body," than the numerical particles of the same names that constituted the ponderable mass in May, 1787, in Pollio's prime of manhood in his 30th year;—the latter no less than the former go into the grave, that is, suffer dissolution, the one in a series, the other simultaneously. The result to the particles is precisely the same in both, and of both therefore we must say with holy Paul,—"*Thou fool! that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be,*" &c. Neither this nor that is the body that abideth. Abideth, I say; for that which riseth again must have remained, though perhaps in an inert state.—It is not dead, but sleepeth;—that is, it is not dissolved any more than the exterior or phenomenal organism appears to us dissolved when it lieth in apparent inactivity during our sleep.

Sound reasoning this, to the best of my judgment, as far as it goes. But how are we to explain the reaction of this fluxional body on the animal? In each moment the particles by the informing force of the living principle constitute an organ not only of motion and sense, but of consciousness. The organ plays on the organist. How is this conceivable? The solution requires a depth, stillness, and subtlety of spirit not only for its discovery, but even for the understanding of it when discovered, and in the most appropriate words enunciated. I can merely give a hint. The particles themselves must have an interior and gravitate being, and the multeity must be a removable or at least suspensible accident.

LECTURE XIII.

On Poesy or Art.

MAN communicates by articulation of sounds, and paramountly by the memory in the ear; nature by the impression of bounds and surfaces on the eye, and through the eye it gives significance and appropriation, and thus the conditions of memory, or the capability of being remembered, to sounds, smells, &c. Now, Art, used collectively for painting, sculpture, architecture and music, is the mediatress between, and reconciler of, nature and man. It is, therefore, the power of humanizing nature, of infusing the thoughts and passions of man into every thing which is the object of his contemplation; colour, form, motion and sound are the elements which it combines, and it stamps them into unity in the mould of a moral idea.

The primary art is writing;—primary, if we regard the purpose abstracted from the different modes of realizing it, those steps of progression of which the instances are still visible in the lower degrees of civilization. First, there is mere gesticulation; then rosaries or *wampun;* then picture language; then hieroglyphics, and finally alphabetic letters. These all consist of a translation of man into nature, of a substitution of the visible for the audible.

The so called music of savage tribes as little deserves the name of art for the understanding as the ear warrants it for music. Its lowest state is a mere expression of passion by sounds which the passion itself necessitates;—the highest amounts to no more than a voluntary reproduction of these sounds in the absence of the occasioning causes, so as to give the pleasure of contrast,—for example, by the various outcries of battle in the song of security and triumph. Poetry also is purely human; for all its materials are from the mind, and all its products are for the mind. But it is the apotheosis of the former state, in which by excitement of the associative power passion itself imitates order, and the order resulting produces a pleasurable passion, and thus it elevates the mind by making its feelings the object of its reflexion. So likewise, whilst it recalls the sights and sounds that had accompanied the occasions of the original

passions, poetry impregnates them with an interest not their own by means of the passions, and yet tempers the passion by the calming power which all distinct images exert on the human soul. In this way poetry is the preparation for art, inasmuch as it avails itself of the forms of nature to recall, to express, and to modify the thoughts and feelings of the mind. Still, however, poetry can only act through the intervention of articulate speech, which is so peculiarly human, that in all languages it constitutes the ordinary phrase by which man and nature are contradistinguished. It is the original force of the word 'brute'; and even 'mute,' and 'dumb' do not convey the absence of sound, but the absence of articulated sounds.

As soon as the human mind is intelligibly addressed by an outward image exclusively of articulate speech, so soon does art commence. But please to observe that I have laid particular stress on the words 'human mind,' meaning to exclude thereby all results common to man and all other sentient creatures, and consequently confining myself to the effect produced by the congruity of the animal impression with the reflective powers of the mind: so that not the thing presented, but that which is represented by the thing shall be the source of the pleasure. In this sense nature itself is to a religious observer the art of God; and for the same cause art itself might be defined as of a middle quality between a thought and a thing; or, as I said before, the union and reconciliation of that which is nature with that which is exclusively human. It is the figured language of thought, and is distinguished from nature by the unity of all the parts in one thought or idea. Hence nature itself would give us the impression of a work of art if we could see the thought which is present at once in the whole and in every part; and a work of art will be just in proportion as it adequately conveys the thought, and rich in proportion to the variety of parts which it holds in unity.

If, therefore, the term 'mute' be taken as opposed not to sound but to articulate speech, the old definition of painting will in fact be the true and best definition of the Fine Arts in general, that is, *muta poesis*, mute poesy; and so of course poesy. And, as all languages perfect themselves by a gradual process of desynonymizing words originally equivalent, I have cherished the wish to use the

word 'poesy' as the generic or common term, and to distinguish that species of poesy which is not *muta poesis* by its usual name 'poetry;' while of all the other species which collectively form the Fine Arts, there would remain this as the common definition,—that they all, like poetry, are to express intellectual purposes, thoughts, conceptions, and sentiments which have their origin in the human mind, not, however, as poetry does, by means of articulate speech, but as nature or the divine art does, by form, colour, magnitude, proportion, or by sound, that is, silently or musically.

Well! it may be said—but who has ever thought otherwise! We all know that art is the imitatress of nature. And, doubtless, the truths which I hope to convey, would be barren truisms, if all men meant the same by the words 'imitate' and 'nature.' But it would be flattering mankind at large, to presume that such is the fact. First, to imitate. The impression on the wax is not an imitation, but a copy, of the seal; the seal itself is an imitation. But, further, in order to form a philosophic conception, we must seek for the kind, as the heat in ice, invisible light, &c. whilst, for practical purposes, we must have reference to the degree. It is sufficient that philosophically we understand that in all imitation two elements must coexist, and not only coexist, but must be perceived as coexisting. These two constituent elements are likeness and unlikeness, or sameness and difference. And in all genuine creations of art there must be a union of these disparates. The artist may take his point of view where he pleases, provided that the desired effect be perceptibly produced,—that there be likeness in the difference, difference in the likeness, and a reconcilement of both in one. If there be likeness to nature without any check of difference, the result is disgusting, and the more complete the delusion, the more loathsome the effect. Why are such simulations of nature, as wax-work figures of men and women, so disagreeable? Because, not finding the motion and the life which we expected, we are shocked as by a falsehood, every circumstance of detail, which before induced us to be interested, making the distance from truth more palpable. You set out with a supposed reality and are disappointed and disgusted with the deception; whilst, in respect to a work of genuine imitation, you begin with an acknowledged total

difference, and then every touch of nature gives you the pleasure of an approximation to truth. The fundamental principle of all this is undoubtedly the horror of falsehood and the love of truth inherent in the human breast. The Greek tragic dance rested on these principles, and I can deeply sympathize in imagination with the Greeks in this favourite part of their theatrical exhibitions, when I call to mind the pleasure I felt in beholding the combat of the Horatii and Curiatii most exquisitely danced in Italy to the music of Cimarosa.

Secondly, as to nature. We must imitate nature! yes, but what in nature,—all and everything? No, the beautiful in nature. And what then is the beautiful? What is beauty? It is, in the abstract, the unity of the manifold, the coalescence of the diverse; in the concrete, it is the union of the shapely (*formosum*) with the vital. In the dead organic it depends on regularity of form, the first and lowest species of which is the triangle with all its modifications, as in crystals, architecture, &c.; in the living organic it is not mere regularity of form, which would produce a sense of formality; neither is it subservient to any thing beside itself. It may be present in a disagreeable object, in which the proportion of the parts constitutes a whole; it does not arise from association, as the agreeable does, but sometimes lies in the rupture of association; it is not different to different individuals and nations, as has been said, nor is it connected with the ideas of the good, or the fit, or the useful. The sense of beauty is intuitive, and beauty itself is all that inspires pleasure without, and aloof from, and even contrarily to, interest.

If the artist copies the mere nature, the *natura naturata*, what idle rivalry! If he proceeds only from a given form, which is supposed to answer to the notion of beauty, what an emptiness, what an unreality there always is in his productions, as in Cipriani's pictures! Believe me, you must master the essence, the *natura naturans*, which presupposes a bond between nature in the higher sense and the soul of man.

The wisdom in nature is distinguished from that in man, by the co-instantaneity of the plan and the execution; the thought and the product are one, or are given at once; but there is no reflex act, and hence there is no moral

responsibility. In man there is reflexion, freedom, and choice; he is, therefore, the head of the visible creation. In the objects of nature are presented, as in a mirror, all the possible elements, steps, and processes of intellect antecedent to consciousness, and therefore to the full development of the intelligential act; and man's mind is the very focus of all the rays of intellect which are scattered throughout the images of nature. Now so to place these images, totalized, and fitted to the limits of the human mind, as to elicit from, and to superinduce upon, the forms themselves the moral reflexions to which they approximate, to make the external internal, the internal external, to make nature thought, and thought nature,—this is the mystery of genius in the Fine Arts. Dare I add that the genius must act on the feeling, that body is but a striving to become mind, that it is mind in its essence!

In every work of art there is a reconcilement of the external with the internal; the conscious is so impressed on the unconscious as to appear in it; as compare mere letters inscribed on a tomb with figures themselves constituting the tomb. He who combines the two is the man of genius; and for that reason he must partake of both. Hence there is in genius itself an unconscious activity; nay, that is the genius in the man of genius. And this is the true exposition of the rule that the artist must first eloign himself from nature in order to return to her with full effect. Why this? Because if he were to begin by mere painful copying, he would produce masks only, not forms breathing life. He must out of his own mind create forms according to the severe laws of the intellect, in order to generate in himself that co-ordination of freedom and law, that involution of obedience in the prescript, and of the prescript in the impulse to obey, which assimilates him to nature, and enables him to understand her. He merely absents himself for a season from her, that his own spirit, which has the same ground with nature, may learn her unspoken language in its main radicals, before he approaches to her endless compositions of them. Yes, not to acquire cold notions—lifeless technical rules—but living and life-producing ideas, which shall contain their own evidence, the certainty that they are essentially one with the germinal causes in nature—his consciousness being the focus and mirror of both,—for this does the artist for a time abandon

the external real in order to return to it with a complete sympathy with its internal and actual. For of all we see, hear, feel and touch the substance is and must be in ourselves; and therefore there is no alternative in reason between the dreary (and thank heaven! almost impossible) belief that every thing around us is but a phantom, or that the life which is in us is in them likewise;[1] and that to know is to resemble, when we speak of objects out of ourselves, even as within ourselves to learn is, according to Plato, only to recollect;—the only effective answer to which, that I have been fortunate enough to meet with, is that which Pope has consecrated for future use in the line—

And coxcombs vanquish Berkeley with a grin!

The artist must imitate that which is within the thing, that which is active through form and figure, and discourses to us by symbols—the *Natur-geist*, or spirit of nature, as we unconsciously imitate those whom we love; for so only can he hope to produce any work truly natural in the object and truly human in the effect. The idea which puts the form together cannot itself be the form. It is above form, and is its essence, the universal in the individual, or the individuality itself,—the glance and the exponent of the indwelling power.

Each thing that lives has its moment of self-exposition, and so has each period of each thing, if we remove the disturbing forces of accident. To do this is the business of ideal art, whether in images of childhood, youth, or age, in man or in woman. Hence a good portrait is the abstract of the personal; it is not the likeness for actual comparison, but for recollection. This explains why the likeness of a very good portrait is not always recognized; because some persons never abstract, and amongst these are especially to be numbered the near relations and friends of the subject, in consequence of the constant pressure and check exercised on their minds by the actual presence of the original. And each thing that only appears to live has also its possible position of relation to life, as nature herself testifies, who, where she cannot be, prophesies her being in the crystallized metal, or the inhaling plant.

The charm, the indispensable requisite, of sculpture is

[1] See the *Biographia Literaria* of Mr. Coleridge, chap. xii., and Schelling's *Transcendental Idealism.*

unity of effect. But painting rests in a material remoter from nature, and its compass is therefore greater. Light and shade give external, as well as internal, being even with all its accidents, whilst sculpture is confined to the latter. And here I may observe that the subjects chosen for works of art, whether in sculpture or painting, should be such as really are capable of being expressed and conveyed within the limits of those arts. Moreover they ought to be such as will affect the spectator by their truth, their beauty, or their sublimity, and therefore they may be addressed to the judgment, the senses, or the reason. The peculiarity of the impression which they may make, may be derived either from colour and form, or from proportion and fitness, or from the excitement of the moral feelings; or all these may be combined. Such works as do combine these sources of effect must have the preference in dignity.

Imitation of the antique may be too exclusive, and may produce an injurious effect on modern sculpture;—1st, generally, because such an imitation cannot fail to have a tendency to keep the attention fixed on externals rather than on the thought within;—2ndly, because, accordingly, it leads the artist to rest satisfied with that which is always imperfect, namely, bodily form, and circumscribes his views of mental expression to the ideas of power and grandeur only;—3rdly, because it induces an effort to combine together two incongruous things, that is to say, modern feelings in antique forms;—4thly, because it speaks in a language, as it were, learned and dead, the tones of which, being unfamiliar, leave the common spectator cold and unimpressed;—and lastly, because it necessarily causes a neglect of thoughts, emotions and images of profounder interest and more exalted dignity, as motherly, sisterly, and brotherly love, piety, devotion, the divine become human,—the Virgin, the Apostle, the Christ. The artist's principle in the statue of a great man should be the illustration of departed merit; and I cannot but think that a skilful adoption of modern habiliments would, in many instances, give a variety and force of effect which a bigoted adherence to Greek or Roman costume precludes. It is, I believe, from artists finding Greek models unfit for several important modern purposes, that we see so many allegorical figures on monuments and elsewhere. Painting was, as it were, a new art, and being unshackled by old

models it chose its own subjects, and took an eagle's flight. And a new field seems opened for modern sculpture in the symbolical expression of the ends of life, as in Guy's monument, Chantrey's children in Worcester Cathedral, &c.

Architecture exhibits the greatest extent of the difference from nature which may exist in works of art. It involves all the powers of design, and is sculpture and painting inclusively. It shews the greatness of man, and should at the same time teach him humility.

Music is the most entirely human of the fine arts, and has the fewest *analoga* in nature. Its first delightfulness is simple accordance with the ear; but it is an associated thing, and recalls the deep emotions of the past with an intellectual sense of proportion. Every human feeling is greater and larger than the exciting cause,—a proof, I think, that man is designed for a higher state of existence; and this is deeply implied in music, in which there is always something more and beyond the immediate expression.

With regard to works in all the branches of the fine arts, I may remark that the pleasure arising from novelty must of course be allowed its due place and weight. This pleasure consists in the identity of two opposite elements, that is to say—sameness and variety. If in the midst of the variety there be not some fixed object for the attention, the unceasing succession of the variety will prevent the mind from observing the difference of the individual objects; and the only thing remaining will be the succession, which will then produce precisely the same effect as sameness. This we experience when we let the trees or hedges pass before the fixed eye during a rapid movement in a carriage, or on the other hand, when we suffer a file of soldiers or ranks of men in procession to go on before us without resting the eye on any one in particular. In order to derive pleasure from the occupation of the mind, the principle of unity must always be present, so that in the midst of the multeity the centripetal force be never suspended, nor the sense be fatigued by the predominance of the centrifugal force. This unity in multeity I have elsewhere stated as the principle of beauty. It is equally the source of pleasure in variety, and in fact a higher term including both. What is the seclusive or distinguishing term between them!

Remember that there is a difference between form as proceeding, and shape as superinduced;—the latter is either the death or the imprisonment of the thing;—the former is its self-witnessing and self-effected sphere of agency. Art would or should be the abridgment of nature. Now the fulness of nature is without character, as water is purest when without taste, smell, or colour; but this is the highest, the apex only,—it is not the whole. The object of art is to give the whole *ad hominem;* hence each step of nature hath its ideal, and hence the possibility of a climax up to the perfect form of a harmonized chaos.

To the idea of life victory or strife is necessary; as virtue consists not simply in the absence of vices, but in the overcoming of them. So it is in beauty. The sight of what is subordinated and conquered heightens the strength and the pleasure; and this should be exhibited by the artist either inclusively in his figure, or else out of it and beside it to act by way of supplement and contrast. And with a view to this, remark the seeming identity of body and mind in infants, and thence the loveliness of the former; the commencing separation in boyhood, and the struggle of equilibrium in youth: thence onward the body is first simply indifferent; then demanding the translucency of the mind not to be worse than indifferent; and finally all that presents the body as body becoming almost of an excremental nature.

LECTURE XIV.

On Style.

I HAVE, I believe, formerly observed with regard to the character of the governments of the East, that their tendency was despotic, that is, towards unity; whilst that of the Greek governments, on the other hand, leaned to the manifold and the popular, the unity in them being purely ideal, namely of all as an identification of the whole. In the northern or Gothic nations the aim and purpose of the government were the preservation of the rights and interests of the individual in conjunction with those of the whole. The individual interest was sacred. In the character and tendency of the Greek and Gothic languages there

is precisely the same relative difference. In Greek the sentences are long, and the structure architectural, so that each part or clause is insignificant when compared with the whole. The result is every thing, the steps and processes nothing. But in the Gothic and, generally, in what we call the modern, languages, the structure is short, simple, and complete in each part, and the connexion of the parts with the sum total of the discourse is maintained by the sequency of the logic, or the community of feelings excited between the writer and his readers. As an instance equally delightful and complete, of what may be called the Gothic structure as contradistinguished from that of the Greeks, let me cite a part of our famous Chaucer's character of a parish priest as he should be. Can it ever be quoted too often?

A good man thér was of religiōun
That was a pouré Parsone of a toun,
But riche he was of holy thought and werk;
He was alsó a lerned man, a clerk,
That Cristés gospel trewély wolde preche;
His párishens [1] devoutly wolde he teche;
Benigne he was, and wonder [2] diligent,
And in adversite ful patient,
And swiche [3] he was ypreved [4] often sithes [5];
Ful loth were him to cursen for his tithes,
But rather wolde he yeven [6] out of doute
Unto his pouré párishens aboute
Of his offring, and eke of his substance;
He coude in litel thing have suffisance.
Wide was his parish, and houses fer asonder,
But he ne [7] left nought for no rain ne [8] thonder,
In sikenesse and in mischief to visite
The ferrest [9] in his parish moche and lite [10]
Upon his fete, and in his hand a staf:
This noble ensample to his shepe he yaf,[11]
That first he wrought, and afterward he taught,
Out of the gospel he the wordés caught,
And this figúre he added yet thereto,
That if gold rusté, what should iren do.
He setté not his benefice to hire,
And lette [12] his shepe accombred [13] in the mire,
And ran untó London untó Seint Poules,
To seken him a chantérie for soules,
Or with a brotherhede to be withold,
But dwelt at home, and kepté wel his fold,

1 Parishioners. 2 Wondrous. 3 Such.
4 Proved. 5 Times. 6 Give or have given.
7 Not. 8 Nor. 9 Farthest.
10 Great and small 11 Gave. 12 Left. 13 Encumbered

So that the wolf ne made it not miscarie:
He was a shepherd and no mercenarie;
And though he holy were and vertuous,
He was to sinful men not dispitous,[1]
Ne of his speché dangerous ne digne,[2]
But in his teching discrete and benigne,
To drawen folk to heven with fairénesse,
By good ensample was his besinesse;
But it were any persone obstinat,
What so he were of high or low estat,
Him wolde he snibben[3] sharply for the nones:
A better preest I trowe that no wher non is:
He waited after no pompe ne reverence,
He maked him no spiced conscience,
But Cristés love and his apostles' twelve
He taught, but first he folwed it himselve.[4]

Such change as really took place in the style of our literature after Chaucer's time is with difficulty perceptible, on account of the death of writers, during the civil wars of the 15th century. But the transition was not very great; and accordingly we find in Latimer and our other venerable authors about the time of Edward VI. as in Luther, the general characteristics of the earliest manner;—that is, every part popular, and the discourse addressed to all [illegible] of intellect;—the sentences short, the tone vene[illegible]nt, and the connexion of the whole produced by [illegible]nesty and singleness of purpose, intensity of passion, and [illegible]ading importance of the subject.

Another and a very different species of style is that which was derived from, and founded on, the admiration and cultivation of the classical writers, and which was more exclusively addressed to the learned class in society. I have previously mentioned Boccaccio as the original Italian introducer of this manner, and the great models of it in English are Hooker, Bacon, Milton, and Taylor, although it may be traced in many other authors of that age. In all these the language is dignified but plain, genuine English, although elevated and brightened by superiority of intellect in the writer. Individual words themselves are always used by them in their precise meaning, without either affectation or slipslop. The letters and state papers of Sir Francis Walsingham are remarkable for excellence in style of this description. In Jeremy Taylor the sentences are often extremely long, and yet are generally

[1] Despiteous. [2] Proud. [3] Reprove. [4] Prologue to Canterbury Tales.

so perspicuous in consequence of their logical structure, that they require no perusal to be understood; and it is for the most part the same in Milton and Hooker.

Take the following sentence as a specimen of the sort of style to which I have been alluding:—

> Concerning Faith, the principal object whereof is that eternal verity which hath discovered the treasures of hidden wisdom in Christ; concerning Hope, the highest object whereof is that everlasting goodness which in Christ doth quicken the dead; concerning Charity, the final object whereof is that incomprehensible beauty which shineth in the countenance of Christ, the Son of the living God: concerning these virtues, the first of which beginning here with a weak apprehension of things not seen, endeth with the intuitive vision of God in the world to come; the second beginning here with a trembling expectation of things far removed, and as yet but only heard of, endeth with real and actual fruition of that which no tongue can express; the third beginning here with a weak inclination of heart towards him unto whom we are not able to approach, endeth with endless union, the mystery whereof is higher than the reach of the thoughts of men; concerning that Faith, Hope, and Charity, without which there can be no salvation, was there ever any mention made saving only in that Law which God himself hath from Heaven revealed? There is not in the world a syllable muttered with certain truth concerning any of these three, more than hath been supernaturally received from the mouth of the eternal God.
>
> *Eccles. Pol.* I. s. 11.

The unity in these writers is produced by the unity of the subject, and the perpetual growth and evolution of the thoughts, one generating, and explaining, and justifying, the place of another, not, as it is in Seneca, where the thoughts, striking as they are, are merely strung together like beads, without any causation or progression. The words are selected because they are the most appropriate, regard being had to the dignity of the total impression, and no merely big phrases are used where plain ones would have sufficed, even in the most learned of their works.

There is some truth in a remark, which I believe was made by Sir Joshua Reynolds, that the greatest man is he who forms the taste of a nation, and that the next greatest is he who corrupts it. The true classical style of Hooker and his fellows was easily open to corruption; and Sir Thomas Brown it was, who, though a writer of great genius, first effectually injured the literary taste of the nation by his introduction of learned words, merely because they were learned. It would be difficult to describe Brown ade-

quately; exuberant in conception and conceit, dignified, hyperlatinistic, a quiet and sublime enthusiast; yet a fantast, a humourist, a brain with a twist; egotistic like Montaigne, yet with a feeling heart and an active curiosity, which, however, too often degenerates into a hunting after oddities. In his *Hydriotaphia* and, indeed, almost all his works the entireness of his mental action is very observable; he metamorphoses every thing, be it what it may, into the subject under consideration. But Sir Thomas Brown with all his faults had a genuine idiom; and it is the existence of an individual idiom in each, that makes the principal writers before the Restoration the great patterns or integers of English style. In them the precise intended meaning of a word can never be mistaken; whereas in the latter writers, as especially in Pope, the use of words is for the most part purely arbitrary, so that the context will rarely show the true specific sense, but only that something of the sort is designed. A perusal of the authorities cited by Johnson in his dictionary under any leading word, will give you a lively sense of this declension in etymological truth of expression in the writers after the Restoration, or perhaps, strictly, after the middle of the reign of Charles II.

The general characteristic of the style of our literature down to the period which I have just mentioned, was gravity, and in Milton and some other writers of his day there are perceptible traces of the sternness of republicanism. Soon after the Restoration a material change took place, and the cause of royalism was graced, sometimes disgraced, by every shade of lightness of manner. A free and easy style was considered as a test of loyalty, or at all events, as a badge of the cavalier party; you may detect it occasionally even in Barrow, who is, however, in general remarkable for dignity and logical sequency of expression; but in L'Estrange, Collyer, and the writers of that class, this easy manner was carried out to the utmost extreme of slang and ribaldry. Yet still the works, even of these last authors, have considerable merit in one point of view; their language is level to the understandings of all men; it is an actual transcript of the colloquialism of the day, and is accordingly full of life and reality. Roger North's life of his brother, the Lord Keeper, is the most valuable specimen of this class of our

literature; it is delightful, and much beyond any other of the writings of his contemporaries.

From the common opinion that the English style attained its greatest perfection in and about Queen Ann's reign I altogether dissent; not only because it is in one species alone in which it can be pretended that the writers of that age excelled their predecessors; but also because the specimens themselves are not equal, upon sound principles of judgment, to much that had been produced before. The classical structure of Hooker—the impetuous, thought-agglomerating flood of Taylor—to these there is no pretence of a parallel; and for mere ease and grace, is Cowley inferior to Addison, being as he is so much more thoughtful and full of fancy? Cowley, with the omission of a quaintness here and there, is probably the best model of style for modern imitation in general. Taylor's periods have been frequently attempted by his admirers; you may, perhaps, just catch the turn of a simile or single image, but to write in the real manner of Jeremy Taylor would require as mighty a mind as his. Many parts of Algernon Sidney's treatises afford excellent exemplars of a good modern practical style; and Dryden in his prose works, is a still better model, if you add a stricter and purer grammar. It is, indeed, worthy of remark that all our great poets have been good prose writers, as Chaucer, Spenser, Milton, and this probably arose from their just sense of metre. For a true poet will never confound verse and prose; whereas it is almost characteristic of indifferent prose writers that they should be constantly slipping into scraps of metre. Swift's style is, in its line, perfect; the manner is a complete expression of the matter, the terms appropriate, and the artifice concealed. It is simplicity in the true sense of the word.

After the Revolution, the spirit of the nation became much more commercial, than it had been before; a learned body, or clerisy, as such, gradually disappeared, and literature in general began to be addressed to the common miscellaneous public. That public had become accustomed to, and required, a strong stimulus; and to meet the requisitions of the public taste, a style was produced which by combining triteness of thought with singularity and excess of manner of expression, was calculated at once to soothe ignorance and to flatter vanity.

The thought was carefully kept down to the immediate apprehension of the commonest understanding, and the dress was as anxiously arranged for the purpose of making the thought appear something very profound. The essence of this style consisted in a mock antithesis, that is, an opposition of mere sounds, in a rage for personification, the abstract made animate, far-fetched metaphors, strange phrases, metrical scraps, in every thing, in short, but genuine prose. Style is, of course, nothing else but the art of conveying the meaning appropriately and with perspicuity, whatever that meaning may be, and one criterion of style is that it shall not be translateable without injury to the meaning. Johnson's style has pleased many from the very fault of being perpetually translateable; he creates an impression of cleverness by never saying any thing in a common way. The best specimen of this manner is in Junius, because his antithesis is less merely verbal than Johnson's. Gibbon's manner is the worst of all; it has every fault of which this peculiar style is capable. Tacitus is an example of it in Latin; in coming from Cicero you feel the *falsetto* immediately.

In order to form a good style, the primary rule and condition is, not to attempt to express ourselves in language before we thoroughly know our own meaning:—when a man perfectly understands himself, appropriate diction will generally be at his command either in writing or speaking. In such cases the thoughts and the words are associated. In the next place preciseness in the use of terms is required, and the test is whether you can translate the phrase adequately into simpler terms, regard being had to the feeling of the whole passage. Try this upon Shakspeare, or Milton, and see if you can substitute other simpler words in any given passage without a violation of the meaning or tone. The source of bad writing is the desire to be something more than a man of sense,—the straining to be thought a genius; and it is just the same in speech-making. If men would only say what they have to say in plain terms, how much more eloquent they would be! Another rule is to avoid converting mere abstractions into persons. I believe you will very rarely find in any great writer before the Revolution the possessive case of an inanimate noun used in prose instead of the dependent case, as 'the watch's hand,' for 'the hand of

the watch.' The possessive or Saxon genitive was confined to persons, or at least to animated subjects. And I cannot conclude this Lecture without insisting on the importance of accuracy of style as being near akin to veracity and truthful habits of mind; he who thinks loosely will write loosely, and, perhaps, there is some moral inconvenience in the common forms of our grammars which give children so many obscure terms for material distinctions. Let me also exhort you to careful examination of what you read, if it be worthy any perusal at all; such examination will be a safeguard from fanaticism, the universal origin of which is in the contemplation of phenomena without investigation into their causes.

ON THE
PROMETHEUS OF ÆSCHYLUS:

An Essay, preparatory to a series of disquisitions respecting the Egyptian, in connexion with the sacerdotal, theology, and in contrast with the mysteries of ancient Greece. Read at the Royal Society of Literature, May 18, 1825.

THE French *savans* who went to Egypt in the train of Buonaparte, Denon, Fourrier, and Dupuis, (it has been asserted,) triumphantly vindicated the chronology of Herodotus, on the authority of documents that cannot lie;—namely the inscriptions and sculptures on those enormous masses of architecture, that might seem to have been built in the wish of rivalling the mountains, and at some unknown future to answer the same purpose, that is, to stand the gigantic tombstones of an elder world. It is decided, say the critics, whose words I have before cited, that the present division of the zodiac had been already arranged by the Egyptians fifteen thousand years before the Christian era, and according to an inscription 'which cannot lie' the temple of Esne is of eight thousand years standing.

Now, in the first place, among a people who had placed their national pride in their antiquity, I do not see the impossibility of an inscription lying; and, secondly, as little can I see the improbability of a modern interpreter misunderstanding it; and lastly, the incredibility of a

French infidel's partaking of both defects, is still less evident to my understanding. The inscriptions may be, and in some instances, very probably are, of later date than the temples themselves,—the offspring of vanity or priestly rivalry, or of certain astrological theories; or the temples themselves may have been built in the place of former and ruder structures, of an earlier and ruder period, and not impossibly under a different scheme of hieroglyphic or significant characters; and these may have been intentionally, or ignorantly, miscopied or mistranslated.

But more than all the preceding,—I cannot but persuade myself, that for a man of sound judgment and enlightened common sense—a man with whom the demonstrable laws of the human mind, and the rules generalized from the great mass of facts respecting human nature, weigh more than any two or three detached documents or narrations, of whatever authority the narrator may be, and however difficult it may be to bring positive proofs against the antiquity of the documents—I cannot but persuade myself, I say, that for such a man, the relation preserved in the first book of the Pentateuch,—and which, in perfect accordance with all analogous experience, with all the facts of history, and all that the principles of political economy would lead us to anticipate, conveys to us the rapid progress in civilization and splendour from Abraham and Abimelech to Joseph and Pharaoh,—will be worth a whole library of such inferences.

I am aware that it is almost universal to speak of the gross idolatry of Egypt; nay, that arguments have been grounded on this assumption in proof of the divine origin of the Mosaic monotheism. But first, if by this we are to understand that the great doctrine of the one Supreme Being was first revealed to the Hebrew legislator, his own inspired writings supply abundant and direct confutation of the position. Of certain astrological superstitions,—of certain talismans connected with star-magic,—plates and images constructed in supposed harmony with the movements and influences of celestial bodies,—there doubtless exist hints, if not direct proofs, both in the Mosaic writings, and those next to these in antiquity. But of plain idolatry in Egypt, or the existence of a polytheistic religion, represented by various idols, each

signifying a several deity, I can find no decisive proof in the Pentateuch; and when I collate these with the books of the prophets, and the other inspired writings subsequent to the Mosaic, I cannot but regard the absence of any such proof in the latter, compared with the numerous and powerful assertions, or evident implications, of Egyptian idolatry in the former, both as an argument of incomparably greater value in support of the age and authenticity of the Pentateuch; and as a strong presumption in favour of the hypothesis on which I shall in part ground the theory which will pervade this series of disquisitions;—namely, that the sacerdotal religion of Egypt had, during the interval from Abimelech to Moses, degenerated from the patriarchal monotheism into a pantheism, cosmotheism, or worship of the world as God.

The reason or pretext, assigned by the Hebrew legislator to Pharaoh for leading his countrymen into the wilderness to join with their brethren, the tribes who still sojourned in the nomadic state, namely, that their sacrifices would be an abomination to the Egyptians, may be urged as inconsistent with, nay, as confuting this hypothesis. But to this I reply, first, that the worship of the ox and cow was not, in and of itself, and necessarily, a contravention of the first commandment, though a very gross breach of the second;—for it is most certain that the ten tribes worshipped the Jehovah, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, under the same or similar symbols:—secondly that the cow, or Isis, and the Io of the Greeks, truly represented, in the first instance, the earth or productive nature, and afterwards the mundane religion grounded on the worship of nature, or the τὸ πᾶν, as God. In after times, the ox or bull was added, representing the sun, or generative force of nature, according to the habit of male and female deities, which spread almost over the whole world,—the positive and negative forces in the science of superstition;—for the pantheism of the sage necessarily engenders polytheism as the popular creed. But lastly, a very sufficient reason may, I think, be assigned for the choice of the ox or cow, as representing the very life of nature, by the first legislators of Egypt, and for the similar sacred character in the Brahmanic tribes of Hindostan. The progress from savagery to civilization is evidently first from the hunting to the pastoral state, a process which

even now is going on, within our own times, among the South American Indians in the vast tracts between Buenos Ayres and the Andes: but the second and the most important step, is from the pastoral, or wandering, to the agricultural, or fixed, state. Now, if even for men born and reared under European civilization, the charms of a wandering life have been found so great a temptation, that few who have taken to it have been induced to return (see the confession in the preamble to the statute respecting the gipsies);[1]—how much greater must have been the danger of relapse in the first formation of fixed states with a condensed population? And what stronger prevention could the ingenuity of the priestly kings—(for the priestly is ever the first form of government)—devise, than to have made the ox or cow the representatives of the divine principle in the world, and, as such, an object of adoration, the wilful destruction of which was sacrilege?—For this rendered a return to the pastoral state impossible; in which the flesh of these animals and the milk formed almost the exclusive food of mankind; while, in the meantime, by once compelling and habituating men to the use of a vegetable diet, it enforced the laborious cultivation of the soil, and both produced and permitted a vast and condensed population. In the process and continued sub-divisions of polytheism, this great sacred Word,—for so the consecrated animals were called, *ἱεροὶ λόγοι*,—became multiplied, till almost every power and supposed attribute of nature had its symbol in some consecrated animal from the beetle to the hawk. Wherever the powers of nature had found a cycle for themselves, in which the powers still produced the same phenomenon during a given period, whether in the motions of the heavenly orbs, or in the smallest living organic body, there the Egyptian sages predicated life and mind. Time, cyclical time, was their abstraction of the deity, and their holidays were their gods.

The diversity between theism and pantheism may be most simply and generally expressed in the following *formula*, in which the material universe is expressed by W, and the deity by G.

$$W - G = 0;$$

[1] The Act meant is probably the 5. Eliz. c. 20, enforcing the two previous Acts of Henry VIII. and Philip and Mary, and reciting that natural born Englishmen had 'become of the fellowship of the said vagabonds, by transforming or disguising themselves in their apparel,' &c.—*Ed.*

or the World without God is an impossible conception. This position is common to theist and pantheist. But the pantheist adds the converse—

$$G - W = O;$$

for which the theist substitutes—

$$G - W = G;$$

or that –

$\bar{G} = G$, anterior and irrelative to the existence of the world, is equal to $G + W$.[1]

Before the mountains were, Thou art.—I am not about to lead the society beyond the bounds of my subject into divinity or theology in the professional sense. But without a precise definition of pantheism, without a clear insight into the essential distinction between it and the theism of the Scriptures, it appears to me impossible to understand either the import or the history of the polytheism of the great historical nations. I beg leave, therefore, to repeat, and to carry on my former position, that the religion of Egypt, at the time of the Exodus of the Hebrews, was a pantheism, on the point of passing into that polytheism, of which it afterwards afforded a specimen, gross and distasteful even to polytheists themselves of other nations.

The objects which, on my appointment as Royal Associate of the Royal Society of Literature, I proposed to myself were, 1st. The elucidation of the purpose of the Greek drama, and the relations in which it stood to the mysteries on the one hand, and to the state or sacerdotal religion on the other:—2nd. The connection of the Greek tragic poets with philosophy as the peculiar offspring of Greek genius.—3rd. The connection of the Homeric and cyclical poets with the popular religion of the Greeks: and, lastly from all these,—namely, the mysteries, the sacerdotal religion, their philosophy before and after Socrates, the stage, the Homeric poetry and the legendary belief of the people, and from the sources and productive causes in the derivation and confluence of the tribes that finally shaped themselves into a nation of Greeks—to give a juster

[1] Mr. Coleridge was in the constant habit of expressing himself on paper by the algebraic symbols. They have an uncouth look in the text of an ordinary essay, and I have sometimes ventured to render them by the equivalent words. But most of the readers of these volumes will know that – means *less by*, or, *without*; + *more by*, or, *in addition to*; = *equal to*, or, *the same as*.—*Ed.*

and more distinct view of this singular people, and of the place which they occupied in the history of the world, and the great scheme of divine providence, than I have hitherto seen,—or rather let me say, than it appears to me possible to give by any other process.

The present Essay, however, I devote to the purpose of removing, or at least invalidating, one objection that I may reasonably anticipate, and which may be conveyed in the following question :—What proof have you of the fact of any connection between the Greek drama, and either the mysteries, or the philosophy, of Greece ? What proof that it was the office of the tragic poet, under a disguise of the sacerdotal religion, mixed with the legendary or popular belief, to reveal as much of the mysteries interpreted by philosophy, as would counteract the demoralizing effects of the state religion, without compromising the tranquillity of the state itself, or weakening that paramount reverence, without which a republic, (such, I mean, as the republics of ancient Greece were) could not exist ?

I know no better way in which I can reply to this objection, than by giving, as my proof and instance, the Prometheus of Æschylus, accompanied with an exposition of what I believe to be the intention of the poet, and the mythic import of the work ; of which it may be truly said, that it is more properly tragedy itself in the plenitude of the idea, than a particular tragic poem ; and as a preface to this exposition, and for the twin purpose of rendering it intelligible, and of explaining its connection with the whole scheme of my Essays, I entreat permission to insert a quotation from a work of my own, which has indeed been in print for many years, but which few of my auditors will probably have heard of, and still fewer, if any, have read.

" As the representative of the youth and approaching manhood of the human intellect we have ancient Greece, from Orpheus, Linus, Musæus, and the other mythological bards, or, perhaps, the brotherhoods impersonated under those names, to the time when the republics lost their independence, and their learned men sank into copyists of, and commentators on, the works of their forefathers. That we include these as educated under a distinct providential, though not miraculous, dispensation, will surprise no one, who reflects, that in whatever has a permanent operation on the destinies and intellectual condition of mankind at

large,—that in all which has been manifestly employed as a co-agent in the mightiest revolution of the moral world, the propagation of the Gospel, and in the intellectual progress of mankind in the restoration of philosophy, science, and the ingenuous arts—it were irreligion not to acknowledge the hand of divine providence. The periods, too, join on to each other. The earliest Greeks took up the religious and lyrical poetry of the Hebrews; and the schools of the prophets were, however partially and imperfectly, represented by the mysteries derived through the corrupt channel of the Phœnicians! With these secret schools of physiological theology, the mythical poets were doubtless in connexion, and it was these schools which prevented polytheism from producing all its natural barbarizing effects. The mysteries and the mythical hymns and pæans shaped themselves gradually into epic poetry and history on the one hand, and into the ethical tragedy and philosophy on the other. Under their protection, and that of a youthful liberty, secretly controlled by a species of internal theocracy, the sciences, and the sterner kinds of the fine arts, that is, architecture and statuary, grew up together, followed, indeed, by painting, but a statuesque, and austerely idealized, painting, which did not degenerate into mere copies of the sense, till the process for which Greece existed had been completed." [1]

The Greeks alone brought forth philosophy in the proper and contra-distinguishable sense of the term, which we may compare to the coronation medal with its symbolic characters, as contrasted with the coins, issued under the same sovereign, current in the market. In the primary sense, philosophy had for its aim and proper subject the τὰ περὶ ἀρχῶν, *de originibus rerum*, as far as man proposes to discover the same in and by the pure reason alone. This, I say, was the offspring of Greece, and elsewhere adopted only. The pre-disposition appears in their earliest poetry.

The first object (or subject matter) of Greek philosophizing was in some measure philosophy itself;—not, indeed, as a product, but as the producing power the productivity. Great minds turned inward on the fact of the diversity between man and beast; a superiority of kind in addition to that of degree; the latter, that is, the difference in degree comprehending the more enlarged sphere and the

[1] Friend, III. Essay 9

multifold application of faculties common to man and brute animals;—even this being in great measure a transfusion from the former, namely, from the superiority in kind;—for only by its co-existence with reason, free-will, self-consciousness, the contra-distinguishing attributes of man, does the instinctive intelligence manifested in the ant, the dog, the elephant, &c. become human understanding. It is a truth with which Heraclitus, the senior, but yet contemporary, of Æschylus, appears, from the few genuine fragments of his writings that are yet extant, to have been deeply impressed,—that the mere understanding in man, considered as the power of adapting means to immediate purposes, differs, indeed, from the intelligence displayed by other animals, and not in degree only; but yet does not differ by any excellence which it derives from itself, or by any inherent diversity, but solely in consequence of a combination with far higher powers of a diverse kind in one and the same subject.

Long before the entire separation of metaphysics from poetry, that is, while yet poesy, in all its several species of verse, music, statuary, &c. continued mythic;—while yet poetry remained the union of the sensuous and the philosophic mind;—the efficient presence of the latter in the *synthesis* of the two, had manifested itself in the sublime *mythus* περι γενέσεως τοῦ νοῦ εν ἀνθρωποις, concerning the *genesis*, or birth of the νους or reason in man. This the most venerable, and perhaps the most ancient, of Grecian *mythi*, is a philosopheme, the very same in subject matter with the earliest record of the Hebrews, but most characteristically different in tone and conception;—for the patriarchal religion, as the antithesis of pantheism, was necessarily personal; and the doctrines of a faith, the first ground of which and the primary enunciation, is the eternal I AM, must be in part historic and must assume the historic form. Hence the Hebrew record is a narrative, and the first instance of the fact is given as the origin of the fact.

That a profound truth—a truth that is, indeed, the grand and indispensable condition of all moral responsibility—is involved in this characteristic of the sacred narrative, I am not alone persuaded, but distinctly aware. This, however, does not preclude us from seeing, nay, as an additional mark of the wisdom that inspired the sacred

historian, it rather supplies a motive to us, impels and authorizes us, to see, in the form of the vehicle of the truth, an accommodation to the then childhood of the human race. Under this impression we may, I trust, safely consider the narration,—introduced, as it is here introduced, for the purpose of explaining a mere work of the unaided mind of man by comparison,—as an ἔπος ἱερογλυφικὸν,—and as such (apparently, I mean, not actually) a *synthesis* of poesy and philosophy, characteristic of the childhood of nations.

In the Greek we see already the dawn of approaching manhood. The substance, the stuff, is philosophy; the form only is poetry. The Prometheus is a *philosophema* ταυτηγορικὸν,—the tree of knowledge of good and evil, — an allegory, a προταίδευμα, though the noblest and the most pregnant of its kind.

The generation of the νοῦς, or pure reason in man. 1. It was superadded or infused, *a supra* to mark that it was no mere evolution of the animal basis;—that it could not have grown out of the other faculties of man, his life, sense, understanding, as the flower grows out of the stem, having pre-existed potentially in the seed: 2. The νοῦς, or fire, was 'stolen,'—to mark its *hetero*—or rather its *allo*-geneity, that is, its diversity, its difference in kind, from the faculties which are common to man with the nobler animals: 3. And stolen 'from Heaven,'—to mark its superiority in kind, as well as its essential diversity. 4. And it was a 'spark,'—to mark that it is not subject to any modifying reaction from that on which it immediately acts; that it suffers no change, and receives no accession, from the inferior, but multiplies itself by conversion, without being alloyed by, or amalgamated with, that which it potentiates, ennobles, and transmutes: 5. And lastly, (in order to imply the homogeneity of the donor and of the gift) it was stolen by a 'god,' and a god of the race before the dynasty of Jove,—Jove the binder of reluctant powers, the coercer and entrancer of free spirits under the fetters of shape, and mass, and passive mobility; but likewise by a god of the same race and essence with Jove, and linked of yore in closest and friendliest intimacy with him. This, to mark the pre-existence, in order of thought, of the *nous*, as spiritual, both to the objects of sense, and to their products, formed

as it were, by the precipitation, or, if I may dare adopt the bold language of Leibnitz, by a coagulation of spirit.[1] In other words this derivation of the spark from above, and from a god anterior to the Jovial dynasty—(that is, to the submersion of spirits in material forms),—was intended to mark the transcendency of the *nous*, the contra-distinctive faculty of man, as timeless, ἄχρονόν τι, and, in this negative sense, eternal. It signified, I say, its superiority to, and its diversity from, all things that subsist in space and time, nay, even those which, though spaceless, yet partake of time, namely, souls or understandings. For the soul, or understanding, if it be defined physiologically as the principle of sensibility, irritability, and growth, together with the functions of the organs, which are at once the representatives and the instruments of these, must be considered *in genere*, though not in degree or dignity, common to man and the inferior animals. It was the spirit, the *nous*, which man alone possessed. And I must be permitted to suggest that this notion deserves some respect, were it only that it can shew a semblance, at least, of sanction from a far higher authority.

The Greeks agreed with the cosmogonies of the East in deriving all sensible forms from the indistinguishable. The latter we find designated as the τὸ ἄμορφον, the ὑδωρ προκοσμικὸν, the χάος as, the essentially unintelligible, yet necessarily presumed, basis or sub-position of all positions. That it is, scientifically considered, an indispensable idea for the human mind, just as the mathematical point, &c. for the geometrician;—of this the various systems of our geologists and cosmogonists, from Burnet to La Place, afford strong presumption. As an idea, it must be interpreted as a striving of the mind to distinguish being from existence,—or potential being, the ground of being containing the possibility of existence, from being actualized. In the language of the mysteries, it was the *esurience*, the πόθος or *desideratum*, the unfuelled fire, the Ceres, the ever-seeking maternal goddess, the origin and interpretation of whose name is found in the Hebrew root signifying hunger, and thence capacity. It

[1] Schelling ascribes this expression, which I have not been able to find in the works of Leibnitz, to Hemsterhuis: "When Leibnitz," says he, "calls matter the sleep-state of the Monads, or when Hemsterhuis calls it *curdled spirit*,—*den geronnenen Geist*.—In fact, matter is no other than spirit contemplated in the equilibrium of its activities." *Transl. Transf. Ideal.* p. 190. S. C.

was, in short, an effort to represent the universal ground of all differences distinct or opposite, but in relation to which all *antithesis* as well as all *antitheta*, existed only potentially. This was the container and withholder, (such is the primitive sense of the Hebrew word rendered darkness (Gen. 1. 2)) out of which light, that is, the *lux lucifica*, as distinguished from *lumen seu lux phœnomenalis*, was produced;—say, rather, that which, producing itself into light as the one pole or antagonist power, remained in the other pole as darkness, that is, gravity, or the principle of mass, or wholeness without distinction of parts.

And here the peculiar, the philosophic, genius of Greece began its fœtal throb. Here it individualized itself in contra-distinction from the Hebrew archology, on the one side, and from the Phœnician, on the other. The Phœnician confounded the indistinguishable with the absolute, the *Alpha* and *Omega*, the ineffable *causa sui*. It confounded, I say, the multeity below intellect, that is, unintelligible from defect of the subject, with the absolute identity above all intellect, that is, transcending comprehension by the plenitude of its excellence. With the Phœnician sages the cosmogony was their theogony and *vice versa*. Hence, too, flowed their theurgic rites, their magic, their worship (*cultus et apotheosis*) of the plastic forces, chemical and vital, and these, or their notions respecting these, formed the hidden meaning, the soul, as it were, of which the popular and civil worship was the body with its drapery.

The Hebrew wisdom imperatively asserts an unbeginning creative One, who neither became the world; nor is the world eternally; nor made the world out of himself by emanation, or evolution;—but who willed it, and it was! Τὰ ἄθεα ἐγίνετο, καὶ ἐγίνετο χάος,—and this chaos, the eternal will, by the spirit and the word, or express *fiat*,—again acting as the impregnant, distinctive, and ordonnant power,—enabled to become a world—κοσμεῖσθαι. So must it be when a religion, that shall preclude superstition on the one hand, and brute indifference on the other, is to be true for the meditative sage, yet intelligible, or at least apprehensible, for all but the fools in heart.

The Greek philosopheme, preserved for us in the Æschylean Prometheus, stands midway betwixt both, yet is

distinct in kind from either. With the Hebrew or purer Semitic, it assumes an X Y Z,—(I take these letters in their alegebraic application)—an indeterminate *Elohim*, antecedent to the matter of the world, ὕλη ἄκοσμος—no less than to the ὕλη κεκοσμημένη. In this point, likewise, the Greek accorded with the Semitic, and differed from the Phœnician –that it held the antecedent X Y Z to be supersensuous and divine. But on the other hand, it coincides with the Phœnician in considering this antecedent ground of corporeal matter,—τῶν σωμάτων καὶ τοῦ σωματικοῦ,—not so properly the cause of the latter, as the occasion and the still continuing substance. *Materia substat adhuc.* The corporeal was supposed co-essential with the antecedent of its corporeity. Matter, as distinguished from body, was a *non ens*, a simple apparition, *id quod mere videtur*; but to body the elder physico-theology of the Greeks allowed a participation in entity. It was *spiritus ipse, oppressus, dormiens, et diversis modis somnians.* In short, body was the productive power suspended, and as it were, quenched in the product. This may be rendered plainer by reflecting, that, in the pure Semitic scheme there are four terms introduced in the solution of the problem, 1. the beginning, self-sufficing, and immutable Creator; 2. the antecedent night as the identity, or including germ, of the light and darkness, that is, gravity; 3. the chaos; and 4. the material world resulting from the powers communicated by the divine *fiat*. In the Phœnician scheme there are in fact but two- a self-organizing chaos, and the omniform nature as the result. In the Greek scheme we have three terms, 1. the *hyle* ὕλη, which holds the place of the chaos, or the waters, in the true system; 2. τὰ σώματα, answering to the Mosaic heaven and earth; and 3. the Saturnian χρόνοι ὑπερχρόνιοι,—which answer to the antecedent darkness of the Mosaic scheme, but to which the elder physico-theologists attributed a self-polarizing power—a *natura gemina quæ fit et facit, agit et patitur.* In other words, the *Elohim* of the Greeks were still but a *natura deorum*, τὸ θεῖον, in which a vague plurality adhered; or if any unity was imagined, it was not personal—not a unity of excellence, but simply an expression of the negative—that which was to pass, but which had not yet passed, into distinct form.

All this will seem strange and obscure at first reading,—perhaps fantastic. But it will only seem so. Dry and

prolix, indeed, it is to me in the writing, full as much as it can be to others in the attempt to understand it. But I know that, once mastered, the idea will be the key to the whole cypher of the Æschylean mythology. The sum stated in the terms of philosophic logic is this: First, what Moses appropriated to the chaos itself: what Moses made passive and a *materia subjecta et lucis et tenebrarum*, the containing προδέμενον of the *thesis* and *antithesis*;—this the Greek placed anterior to the chaos;—the chaos itself being the struggle between the *hyperchronia*, the ἰδέαι τρόνομοι, as the unevolved, unproduced, *prothesis*, of which ἰδέα καὶ νόμος —(idea and law)—are the *thesis* and *antithesis*. (I use the word 'produced' in the mathematical sense, as a point elongating itself to a bi-polar line.) Secondly, what Moses establishes, not merely as a transcendant *Monas*, but as an individual Ἑνάς likewise; - this the Greek took as a harmony, θεοὶ ἀθάνατοι, τὸ θεῖον, as distinguished from ὁ θεός —or, to adopt the more expressive language of the Pythagoreans and cabalists *numen numerantis*; and these are to be contemplated as the identity.

Now according to the Greek philosopheme or *mythus*, in these, or in this identity, there arose a war, schism, or division, that is, a polarization into *thesis* and *antithesis*. In consequence of this schism in the τὸ θεῖον, the *thesis* becomes *nomos*, or law, and the *antithesis* becomes *idea*, but so that the *nomos* is *nomos*, because, and only because, the *idea* is *idea*: the *nomos* is not idea, only because the idea has not become *nomos*. And this *not* must be heedfully borne in mind through the whole interpretation of this most profound and pregnant philosopheme. The *nomos* is essentially idea, but existentially it is idea, *substans*, that is, *id quod stat subtus*, understanding *sensu generalissimo*. The *idea*, which now is no longer idea, has substantiated itself, become real as opposed to idea, and is henceforward, therefore *substans in substantiato*. The first product of its energy is the thing itself: *ipsa se posuit et jam facta est ens positum*. Still, however, its productive energy is not exhausted in this product, but overflows, or is effluent, as the specific forces, properties, faculties, of the product. It reappears, in short, in the body, as the function of the body. As a sufficient illustration, though it cannot be offered as a perfect instance, take the following.

'In the world we see every where evidences of a unity,

which the component parts are so far from explaining, that they necessarily presuppose it as the cause and condition of their existing as those parts, or even of their existing at all. This antecedent unity, or cause and principle of each union, it has since the time of Bacon and Kepler, been customary to call a law. This crocus, for instance, or any flower the reader may have in sight or choose to bring before his fancy;—that the root, stem, leaves, petals, &c. cohere as one plant, is owing to an antecedent power or principle in the seed, which existed before a single particle of the matters that constitute the size and visibility of the crocus had been attracted from the surrounding soil, air, and moisture. Shall we turn to the seed? Here too the same necessity meets us, an antecedent unity (I speak not of the parent plant, but of an agency antecedent in order of operance, yet remaining present as the conservative and reproductive power,) must here too be supposed. Analyze the seed with the finest tools, and let the solar microscope come in aid of your senses,—what do you find?—means and instruments, a wondrous fairy-tale of nature, magazines of food, stores of various sorts, pipes, spiracles, defences,—a house of many chambers, and the owner and inhabitant invisible.'[1] Now, compare a plant thus contemplated with an animal. In the former, the productive energy exhausts itself, and as it were, sleeps in the product or *organismus*—in its root, stem, foliage, blossoms, seed. Its balsams, gums, resins, *aromata*, and all other bases of its sensible qualities, are, it is well known, mere excretions from the vegetable, eliminated, as lifeless, from the actual plant. The qualities are not its properties, but the properties, or far rather, the dispersion and volatilization of these extruded and rejected bases. But in the animal it is otherwise. Here the antecedent unity—the productive and self-realizing idea—strives, with partial success to reemancipate itself from its product, and seeks once again to become *idea*: vainly indeed: for in order to this, it must be retrogressive, and it hath subjected itself to the fates, the evolvers of the endless thread—to the stern necessity of progression. *Idea* itself it cannot become, but it may in long and graduated process, become an image, an ANALOGON, an anti-type of IDEA. And this εἴδωλον may approximate to a perfect likeness. *Quod est simile, nequit*

[1] Aids to Reflection. Moral and Religious Aphorisms. Aphorism VI. *Ed.*

esse idem. Thus, in the lower animals, we see this process of emancipation commence with the intermediate link, or that which forms the transition from properties to faculties, namely, with sensation. Then the faculties of sense, locomotion, construction, as, for instance, webs, hives, nests, &c. Then the functions; as of instinct, memory, fancy, instinctive intelligence, or understanding, as it exists in the most intelligent animals. Thus the idea (henceforward no more idea, but irrecoverable by its own fatal act) commences the process of its own transmutation, as *substans in substantiato*, as the *entelechæ*, or the *vis formatrix*, and it finishes the process as *substans e substantiato*, that is, as the understanding.

If, for the purpose of elucidating this process, I might be allowed to imitate the symbolic language of the algebraists, and thus to regard the successive steps of the process as so many powers and dignities of the *nomos* or law, the scheme would be represented thus :—

$$\text{Nomos}^1 = \text{Product} : \quad N^2 \quad \text{Property} : \quad N^3 = \text{Faculty} : \quad N^4 = \text{Function} \quad N^5 = \text{Understanding} ;—$$

which is, indeed, in one sense, itself a *nomos*, inasmuch as it is the index of the *nomos*, as well as its highest function; but, like the hand of a watch, it is likewise a *nomizomenon*. It is a verb, but still a verb passive.

On the other hand, idea is so far co-essential with *nomos*, that by its co-existence – (not confluence) —with the *nomos* ἐν νομιζομένοις (with the *organismus* and its faculties and functions in the man,) it becomes itself a *nomos*. But, observe, a *nomos autonomos*, or containing its law in itself likewise; —even as the *nomos* produces for its highest product the understanding, so the idea, in its opposition and, of course, its correspondence to the *nomos*, begets in itself an *analogon* to product; and this is self-consciousness. But as the product can never become idea, so neither can the idea (if it is to remain idea) become or generate a distinct product. This *analogon* of product is to be itself; but were it indeed and substantially a product, it would cease to be self. It would be an object for a subject, not (as it is and must be) an object that is its own subject, and *vice versa*; a conception which, if the uncombining and infusile genius of our language allowed it, might be expressed by the term sub-

ject-object. Now, idea, taken in indissoluble connection with this *analogon* of product is mind, that which knows itself, and the existence of which may be inferred, but cannot appear or become a *phenomenon.*

By the benignity of Providence, the truths of most importance in themselves, and which it most concerns us to know, are familiar to us, even from childhood. Well for us if we do not abuse this privilege, and mistake the familiarity of words which convey these truths, for a clear understanding of the truths themselves! If the preceding disquisition, with all its subtlety and all its obscurity, should answer no other purpose, it will still have been neither purposeless, nor devoid of utility, should it only lead us to sympathize with the strivings of the human intellect, awakened to the infinite importance of the inward oracle γνῶθι σεαυτόν—and almost instinctively shaping its course of search in conformity with the Platonic intimation:—ψυχῆς φύσιν ἀξίως λόγου κατανοῆσαι οἴει δυνατὸν εἶναι, ἄνευ τῆς τοῦ ὅλου φύσεως; but be this as it may, the groundwork of the Æschylean *mythus* is laid in the definition of idea and law, as correlatives that mutually interpret each the other;—an idea, with the adequate power of realizing itself being a law, and a law considered abstractedly from, or in the absence of, the power of manifesting itself in its appropriate product being an idea. Whether this be true philosophy, is not the question. The school of Aristotle would, of course, deny, the Platonic affirm it, for in this consists the difference of the two schools. Both acknowledge ideas as distinct from the mere generalizations from objects of sense: both would define an idea as an *ens rationale*, to which there can be no adequate correspondent in sensible experience. But, according to Aristotle, ideas are regulative only, and exist only as functions of the mind: according to Plato, they are constitutive likewise, and one in essence with the power and life of nature;—ἐι λόγῳ ζωὴ ἦν, καὶ ἡ ζωὴ ἦν τὸ φῶς τῶν ἀνθρώτων. And this I assert, was the philosophy of the mythic poets, who, like Æschylus, adapted the secret doctrines of the mysteries as the (not always safely disguised) antidote to the debasing influences of the religion of the state.

But to return and conclude this preliminary explanation. We have only to substitute the term will, and the term constitutive power, for *nomos* or law, and the process is the

same. Permit me to represent the identity or *prothesis* by the letter Z and the *thesis* and *antithesis* by X and Y respectively. Then I say X by not being Y, but in consequence of being the correlative opposite of Y, is will; and Y, by not being X, but the correlative and opposite of X, is nature,—*natura naturans*, νόμος φυσικός. Hence we may see the necessity of contemplating the idea now as identical with the reason, and now as one with the will, and now as both in one, in which last case I shall, for convenience sake, employ the term *Nous*, the rational will, the practical reason.

We are now out of the holy jungle of transcendental metaphysics; if indeed, the reader's patience shall have had strength and persistency enough to, allow me to exclaim—

Ivimus ambo
Per densas umbras: at tenet umbra Deum.

Not that I regard the foregoing as articles of faith, or as all true;—I have implied the contrary by contrasting it with, at least, by shewing its disparateness from, the Mosaic, which, *bona fide*, I do regard as the truth. But I believe there is much, and profound, truth in it, *supra captum* φιλοσόφων, *qui non agnoscunt divinum, idcoque nec naturam, nisi nomine, agnoscunt; sed res cunctas ex sensuali corporeo cogitant, quibus hac ex causa interiora clausa manent, et simul cum illis exteriora quæ proxima interioribus sunt!* And with no less confidence do I believe that the positions above given, true or false are contained in the Promethean *mythus*.

In this *mythus*, Jove is the impersonated representation or symbol of the *nomos*—*Jupiter est quodcunque vides*. He is the *mens agitans molem*, but at the same time, the *molem corpoream ponens et constituens*. And so far the Greek philosopheme does not differ essentially from the cosmotheism, or identification of God with the universe, in which consisted the first apostacy of mankind after the flood, when they combined to raise a temple to the heavens, and which is still the favored religion of the Chinese. Prometheus, in like manner, is the impersonated representative of Idea, or of the same power as Jove, but contemplated as independent and not immersed in the product,—as law *minus* the productive energy. As such it is next to be

seen what the several significances of each must or may be according to the philosophic conception; and of which significances, therefore, should we find in the philosopheme a correspondent to each, we shall be entitled to assert that such are the meanings of the fable. And first of Jove:—

Jove represents 1. *Nomos* generally, as opposed to Idea or *Nous*: 2. *Nomos archinomos*, now as the father, now as the sovereign, and now as the includer and representative of the *νόμοι οὐράνιοι κοσμικοί*, or *dii majores*, who, had joined or come over to Joye in the first schism: 3. *Nomos δαμνητής*—the subjugator of the spirits, of the *ἰδέαι πρόνομοι*, who, thus subjugated, became *νόμοι ὑπονόμιοι ὑποσπόνδοι*, *Titanes pacati*, *dii minores*, that is, the elements considered as powers reduced to obedience under yet higher powers than themselves: 4. *Nomos πολιτικός*, law in the Pauline sense, *νόμος ἀλλοτριόνομος* in antithesis to *νόμος αὐτόνομος*.

COROLLARY.

It is in this sense that Jove's jealous, ever-quarrelsome, spouse represents the political sacerdotal *cultus*, the church, in short, of republican paganism; a church by law established for the mere purposes of the particular state, unennobled by the consciousness of instrumentality to higher purposes;—at once unenlightened and unchecked by revelation. Most gratefully ought we to acknowledge that since the completion of our constitution in 1688, we may, with unflattering truth, elucidate the spirit and character of such a church by the contrast of the institution, to which England owes the larger portion of its superiority in that, in which alone superiority is an unmixed blessing, —the diffused cultivation of its inhabitants. But previously to this period, I shall offend no enlightened man if I say without distinction of parties—*intra muros peccatur et extra*;—that the history of Christendom presents us with too many illustrations of this Junonian jealousy, this factious harassing of the sovereign power as soon as the latter betrayed any symptoms of a disposition to its true policy, namely, to privilege and perpetuate that which is best,—to tolerate the tolerable,—and to restrain none but those who would restrain all, and subjugate even

the state itself. But while truth extorts this confession, it, at the same time, requires that it should be accompanied by an avowal of the fact, that the spirit is a relic of Paganism; and with a bitter smile would an Æschylus or a Plato in the shades, listen to a Gibbon or a Hume vaunting the mild and tolerant spirit of the state religions of ancient Greece or Rome. Here we have the sense of Jove's intrigues with Europa, Io, &c. whom the god, in his own nature a general lover, had successively taken under his protection. And here, too, see the full appropriateness of this part of the *mythus*, in which symbol fades away into allegory, but yet in reference to the working cause, as grounded in humanity, and always existing either actually or potentially, and thus never ceases wholly to be a symbol or tautegory.

Prometheus represents, 1. *sensu generali*, Idea πρόνομος, and in this sense he is a θεὸς ὁμόφυλος, a fellow-tribesman both of the *dii majores*, with Jove at their head, and of the Titans or *dii pacati*: 2. He represents Idea φιλόνομος, νομοδείκτης; and in this sense the former friend and counsellor of Jove or *Nous uranius*: 3. Λόγος φιλάνθρωπος, the divine humanity, the humane God, who retained unseen, kept back, or (in the *catachresis* characteristic of the Phœnicio-Grecian mythology) stole, a portion or *ignicula* from the living spirit of law, which remained with the celestial gods unexpended ἐν τῷ νομίζεσθαι. He gave that which, according to the whole analogy of things, should have existed either as pure divinity, the sole property and birthright of the *Dii Joviales*, the *Uranions*, or was conceded to inferior beings as a *substans in substantiato*. This spark divine Prometheus gave to an elect, a favored animal, not as a *substans* or understanding, commensurate with, and confined by, the constitution and conditions of this particular organism, but as *aliquid superstans, liberum, non subactum, invictum, impacatum,* μὴ νομιζόμενον. This gift, by which we are to understand reason theoretical and practical, was therefore a νόμος αὐτόνομος -- unapproachable and unmodifiable by the animal basis—that is, by the pre-existing *substans* with its products, the animal *organismus* with its faculties and functions; but yet endowed with the power of potentiating, ennobling, and prescribing to, the substance; and hence, therefore, a νόμος νομοπείθης, *lex legisuada*: 4. By

a transition, ordinary even in allegory, and appropriate to mythic symbol, but especially significant in the present case—the transition, I mean, from the giver to the gift—the giver, in very truth, being the gift, 'whence the soul receives reason; and reason is her being,' says our Milton. Reason is from God, and God is reason, *mens ipsissima.*

5. Prometheus represents, *Nous* ἐν ἀνθρώπῳ — νοῦς ἀγωνιστής. Thus contemplated, the *Nous* is of necessity, powerless; for all power, that is, productivity, or productive energy, is in Law, that is, νόμος ἀλλοτριόνομος:[1] still, however, the Idea in the Law, the *numerus numerans* become νόμος, is the principle of the Law; and if with Law dwells power, so with the knowledge or the Idea *scientialis* of the Law, dwells prophecy and foresight. A perfect astronomical time-piece in relation to the motions of the heavenly bodies, or the magnet in the mariner's compass in relation to the magnetism of the earth, is a sufficient illustration.

6. Both νόμος and Idea (or *Nous*) are the *verbum;* but, as in the former, it is *verbum fiat* 'the Word of the Lord,' —in the latter it must be the *verbum fiet* or, 'the Word of the Lord in the mouth of the prophet.' *Pari argumento,* as the knowledge is therefore not power, the power is not knowledge. The νόμος, the Ζεῦς παντοκράτωρ, seeks to learn, and, as it were, to wrest the secret, the hateful secret, of his own fate, namely, the transitoriness adherent to all antithesis; for the identity or the absolute is alone eternal. This secret Jove would extort from the *Nous,* or Prometheus, which is the sixth representment of Prometheus.

7. Introduce but the least of real as opposed to *ideal,* the least speck of positive existence, even though it were but the mote in a sunbeam, into the sciential *contemplamen* or theorem, and it ceases to be science. *Ratio desinit esse pura ratio et fit discursus, stat subter et fit* ὑποθετικόν:—*non superstat.* The *Nous* is bound to a rock, the immovable firmness of which is indissolubly connected with its barrenness, its non-productivity. Were it productive it would be *Nomos;* but it is *Nous,* because it is not *Nomos.*

[1] I scarcely need say, that I use the word ἀλλοτριόνομος as a participle active, as exercising law on another, not as receiving law from another, though the latter is the classical force (I suppose) of the word.

8. Solitary ἀβάτῳ ἐν ἐρημίᾳ. Now I say that the *Nous*, notwithstanding its diversity from the *Nomizomeni*, is yet, relatively to their supposed original essence, πᾶσι τοῖς νομιζομένοις ταυτογενὴς, of the same race or *radix:* though in another sense, namely, in relation to the πᾶν θεῖον — the pantheistic *Elohim*, it is conceived anterior to the schism, and to the conquest and enthronization of Jove who succeeded. Hence the Prometheus of the great tragedian is θεὸς συγγενής. The kindred deities come to him, some to soothe, to condolé; others to give weak, yet friendly, counsels of submission; others to tempt, or insult. The most prominent of the latter, and the most odious to the imprisoned and insulated *Nous*, is Hermes, the impersonation of interest with the entrancing and serpentine *Caduceus*, and, as interest or motives intervening between the reason and its immediate self-determinations, with the antipathies to the νόμος αὐτονόμος. The Hermes impersonates the eloquence of cupidity, the cajolement of power regnant; and in a larger sense, custom, the irrational in language, ῥήματα τὰ ῥητορικα, the fluent, from ῥέω—the rhetorical in opposition to λόγοι, τὰ νοητά. But, primarily, the Hermes is the symbol of interest. He is the messenger, the inter-nuncio, in the low but expressive phrase, the go-between, to beguile or insult. And for the other visitors of Prometheus, the elementary powers, or spirits of the elements, *Titanes pacati*, θεοὶ ὑπονόμιοι, vassal potentates, and their solicitations, the noblest interpretation will be given, if I repeat the lines of our great contemporary poet:—

> Earth fills her lap with pleasures of her own:
> Yearnings she hath in her own natural kind,
> And e'en with something of a mother's mind,
> And no unworthy aim,
> The homely nurse doth all she can
> To make her foster-child, her inmate, Man
> Forget the glories he hath known
> And that imperial palace whence he came:—
>
> WORDSWORTH.

which exquisite language is prefigured in coarser clay, indeed, and with a less lofty spirit, but yet excellently in their kind, and even more fortunately for the illustration and ornament of the present commentary, in the fifth, sixth, and seventh stanzas of Dr. Henry More's poem on the Pre-existence of the Soul:—

Thus groping after our own center's near
And proper substance, we grew dark, contract,
Swallow'd up of earthly life! Ne what we were
Of old, thro' ignorance can we detect.
Like noble babe, by fate or friends' neglect
Left to the care of sorry salvage wight,
Grown up to manly years cannot conject
His own true parentage, nor read aright
What father him begot, what womb him brought to light.

So we, as stranger infants elsewhere born,
Cannot divine from what spring we did flow;
Ne dare these base alliances to scorn,
Nor lift ourselves a whit from hence below;
Ne strive our parentage again to know,
Ne dream we once of any other stock,
Since foster'd upon Rhea's [1] knees we grow,
In Satyrs' arms with many a mow and mock
Oft danced; and hairy Pan our cradle oft hath rock'd!

But Pan nor Rhea be our parentage!
We been the offspring of the all seeing Nous, &c.

To express the supersensual character of the reason, its abstraction from sensation, we find the Prometheus *ἀτερπῆ*, —while in the yearnings accompanied with the remorse incident to, and only possible in consequence of the Nous being, the rational, self-conscious, and therefore responsible will, he is *γυπὶ διαχναιόμενος*.

If to these contemplations we add the control and despotism exercised on the free reason by Jupiter in his symbolical character, as *νόμος πολιτικὸς*;—by custom (Hermes); by necessity, *βία καὶ κρατὸς*;—by the mechanic arts and powers, *συγγενεῖς τῷ Νοῷ* though they are, and which are symbolized in Hephaistos,—we shall see at once the propriety of the title, Prometheus, *δεσμώτης*.

9. Nature, or *Zeus* as the *νόμος ἐν νομιζομένοις*, knows herself only, can only come to a knowledge of herself, in man! And even in man, only as man is supernatural, above nature, noetic. But this knowledge man refuses to communicate; that is, the human understanding alone is at once self-conscious and conscious of nature. And this high prerogative it owes exclusively to its being an assessor of the

[1] Rhea (from *ῥέω, fluo*), that is, the earth as the transitory, the ever-flowing nature, the flux and sum of *phenomena*, or objects of the outward sense, in contradistinction from the earth as Vesta, as the firmamental law that sustains and disposes the apparent world! The Satyrs represent the sports and appetences of the sensuous nature (*φρόνημα σαρκὸς*)—Pan, or the total life of the earth, the presence of all in each, the universal *organismus* of bodies and bodily energy.

reason. Yet even the human understanding in its height of place seeks vainly to appropriate the ideas of the pure reason, which it can only represent by *idola*. Here, then, the *Nous* stands as Prometheus *ἀντίπαλος*, *renuens*—in hostile opposition to Jupiter *Inquisitor*.

10. Yet finally, against the obstacles and even under the fostering influences of the *Nomos*, *τοῦ νομίμου*, a son of Jove himself, but a descendant from Io, the mundane religion, as contra-distinguished from the sacerdotal *cultus*, or religion of the state, an Alcides *Liberator* will arise, and the *Nous* or divine principle in man, will be Prometheus *ἐλευθερώμενος*.

Did my limits or time permit me to trace the persecutions, wanderings, and migrations of the Io, the mundane religion, through the whole map marked out by the tragic poet, the coincidences would bring the truth, the unarbitrariness, of the preceding exposition as near to demonstration as can rationally be required on a question of history, that must, for the greater part, be answered by combination of scattered facts. But this part of my subject, together with a particular exemplification of the light which my theory throws both on the sense and the beauty of numerous passages of this stupendous poem, I must reserve for a future communication.

NOTES.[1]

v. 15. *φάραγγι* :—'in a coomb, or combe.'

v. 17.

ἐξωριάζειν γὰρ πατρὸς λόγους βαρύ.

ἐξωριάζειν, as the editor confesses, is a word introduced into the text against the authority of all editions and manuscripts. I should prefer *ἐξωριάζειν*, notwithstanding its being a *ἅπαξ λεγόμενον*. The *εὐ*—seems to my tact too free and easy a word ;– and yet our 'to trifle with' appears the exact meaning.

[1] Written in Bp. Blomfield's edition, and communicated by Mr. Cary. *Ed.*

SUMMARY OF AN ESSAY

ON THE FUNDAMENTAL POSITION OF THE MYSTERIES IN RELATION TO GREEK TRAGEDY.

THE Position, to the establishment of which Mr. Coleridge regards his essay as the Prolegomena, is: that the Greek Tragedy stood in the same relation to the Mysteries, as the Epic Song, and the Fine Arts to the Temple Worship, or the Religion of the State; that the proper function of the Tragic Poet was under the disguise of popular superstitions, and using the popular Mythology as his stuff and drapery to communicate so much and no more of the doctrines preserved in the Mysteries as should counteract the demoralizing influence of the state religion, without disturbing the public tranquillity, or weakening the reverence for the laws, or bringing into contempt the ancestral and local usages and traditions on which the patriotism of the citizens mainly rested, or that nationality in its intensest form which was little less than essential in the constitution of a Greek republic. To establish this position it was necessary to explain the nature of these secret doctrines, or at least the fundamental principles of the faith and philosophy of Elensis and Samothrace. The Samothracian Mysteries Mr. Coleridge supposes to have been of Phœnician origin, and both these and the Elensinian to have retained the religious belief of the more ancient inhabitants of the Peloponnesus, prior to their union with the Hellenes and the Egyptian colonies: that it comprised sundry relics and fragments of the Patriarchal Faith, the traditions historical and prophetic of the Noetic Family, though corrupted and depraved by their combination with the system of Pantheism, or the Worship of the Universe as God (*Jupiter est quodcunque vides*) which Mr. Coleridge contends to have been the first great Apostacy of the Ancient World. But a religion founded on Pantheism, is of necessity a religion founded on philosophy, *i.e.* an attempt to determine the origin of nature by the unaided strength of the human intellect, however unsound and false that philosophy may have been. And of this the sacred books of the Indian Priests afford at once proof and instance. Again: the earlier the date of any philo-

sophic scheme, the more *subjective* will it be found—in other words the earliest reasoners sought in their own minds the form, measure and substance of all other power. Abstracting from whatever was individual and accidental, from whatever distinguished one human mind from another, they fixed their attention exclusively on the characters which belong to all rational beings, and which therefore they contemplated as mind itself, mind in its essence. And however averse a scholar of the present day may be to these first-fruits of speculative thought, as metaphysics, a knowledge of their contents and distinctive tenets is indispensable as history. At all events without this knowledge he will in vain attempt to understand the spirit and genius of the arts, institutions and governing minds of ancient Greece. The difficulty of comprehending any scheme of opinion is proportionate to its greater or lesser unlikeness to the principles and modes of reasoning in which our own minds have been formed. Where the difference is so great as almost to amount to contrariety, no clearness in the exhibition of the scheme will remove the sense, or rather, perhaps the *sensation*, of strangeness from the hearer's mind. Even beyond its utmost demerits it will appear obscure, unreal, visionary. This difficulty the author anticipates as an obstacle to the ready comprehension of the first principles of the eldest philosophy, and the esoteric doctrines of the Mysteries; but to the necessity of overcoming this the only obstacle, the thoughtful inquirer must resign himself, as the condition under which alone he may expect to solve a series of problems the most interesting of all that the records of ancient history propose or suggest.

The fundamental position of the Mysteries, Mr. Coleridge contends, consists in affirming that the productive powers or laws of nature are essentially the same with the active powers of the mind—in other words that mind, or Nous, under which term they combine the universal attributes of reason and will, is a principle of forms or patterns, endued with a tendency to manifest itself as such; and that this mind or eternal essence exists in two modes of being. Namely, either the form and the productive power, which gives it outward and phœnomenal reality, are united in equal and adequate proportions, in which case it is what the eldest philosophers, and the moderns in imitation of them, call a *law* of nature: or the *form* remaining the same,

but with the productive power in unequal or inadequate proportions, whether the diminution be effected by the mind's own act or original determination not to put forth this inherent power, or whether the power have been repressed, and as it were driven inward by the violence of a superior force from without,—and in this case it was called by the most Ancient School " Intelligible Number," by a later School " Idea," or *Mind*—κατ' ἐξοχήν. To this position a second was added, namely, that the form could not put forth its productive or self-realizing power without ceasing at the same moment to exist *for* itself,—i.e. to exist, and know itself as existing. The formative power was as it were alienated from itself and absorbed in the product. It existed as an instinctive, essentially intelligential, but not self-knowing, power. It was law, Jupiter, or (when contemplated plurally) the Dii Majores. On the other hand, to possess its own being consciously, the form must remain single and only inwardly productive. To exist *for* itself, it must continue to exist *by* itself. It must be an *idea*; but an idea in the primary sense of the term, the sense attached to it by the oldest Italian School and by Plato,—not as a synonyme of, but in contra-distinction from, image, conception or notion: as a true entity of all entities the most actual, of all essences the most essential.

Now on this Antithesis of idea and law, that is of mind as an unproductive but self-knowing power, and of mind as a productive but unconscious power, the whole religion of pantheism as disclosed in the Mysteries turns, as on its axis, bi-polar.

FRAGMENT OF AN ESSAY ON TASTE. 1810.

THE same arguments that decide the question, whether taste has any fixed principles, may probably lead to a determination of what those principles are. First then, what is taste in its metaphorical sense, or, which will be the easiest mode of arriving at the same solution, what is there in the primary sense of the word, which may give to its metaphorical meaning an import different from that of sight or hearing, on the one hand, and of touch or

smell on the other? And this question seems the more natural, because in correct language we confine beauty, the main subject of taste, to objects of sight and combinations of sounds, and never, except sportively or by abuse of words, speak of a beautiful flavour, or a beautiful scent.

Now the analysis of our senses in the commonest books of anthropology has drawn our attention to the distinction between the perfectly organic, and the mixed senses;—the first presenting objects, as distinct from the perception;—the last as blending the perception with the sense of the object. Our eyes and ears—(I am not now considering what is or is not the case really, but only that of which we are regularly conscious as appearances,) our eyes most often appear to us perfect organs of the sentient principle, and wholly in action, and our hearing so much more so than the three other senses, and in all the ordinary exertions of that sense, perhaps, equally so with the sight, that all languages place them in one class, and express their different modifications by nearly the same metaphors. The three remaining senses appear in part passive, and combine with the perception of the outward object a distinct sense of our own life. Taste, therefore, as opposed to vision and sound, will teach us to expect in its metaphorical use a certain reference of any given object to our own being, and not merely a distinct notion of the object as in itself, or in its independent properties. From the sense of touch, on the other hand, it is distinguishable by adding to this reference to our vital being some degree of enjoyment, or the contrary,—some perceptible impulse from pleasure or pain to complacency or dislike. The sense of smell, indeed, might perhaps have furnished a metaphor of the same import with that of taste; but the latter was naturally chosen by the majority of civilized nations on account of the greater frequency, importance, and dignity of its employment or exertion in human nature.

By taste, therefore, as applied to the fine arts, we must be supposed to mean an intellectual perception of any object blended with a distinct reference to our own sensibility of pain or pleasure, or, *vice versa*, a sense of enjoyment or dislike co-instantaneously combined with, and appearing to proceed from, some intellectual perception of the object;—intellectual perception, I say; for other-

wise it would be a definition of taste in its primary rather than in its metaphorical sense. Briefly, taste is a metaphor taken from one of our mixed senses, and applied to objects of the more purely organic senses, and of our moral sense, when we would imply the co-existence of immediate personal dislike or complacency. In this definition of taste, therefore, is involved the definition of fine arts, namely, as being such the chief and discriminative purpose of which it is to gratify the taste,—that is, not merely to connect, but to combine and unite, a sense of immediate pleasure in ourselves, with the perception of external arrangement.

The great question, therefore, whether taste in any one of the fine arts has any fixed principle or ideal, will find its solution in the ascertainment of two facts:—first, whether in every determination of the taste concerning any work of the fine arts, the individual does not, with or even against the approbation of his general judgment, involuntarily claim that all other minds ought to think and feel the same; whether the common expressions, 'I dare say I may be wrong, but that is my particular taste;' —are uttered as an offering of courtesy, as a sacrifice to the undoubted fact of our individual fallibility, or are spoken with perfect sincerity, not only of the reason but of the whole feeling, with the same entireness of mind and heart, with which we concede a right to every person to differ from another in his preference of bodily tastes and flavours. If we should find ourselves compelled to deny this, and to admit that, notwithstanding the consciousness of our liability to error, and in spite of all those many individual experiences which may have strengthened the consciousness, each man does at the moment so far legislate for all men, as to believe of necessity that he is either right or wrong, and that if it be right for him, it is universally right,—we must then proceed to ascertain:—secondly, whether the source of these phenomena is at all to be found in those parts of our nature, in which each intellect is representative of all,—and whether wholly, or partially. No person of common reflection demands even in feeling, that what tastes pleasant to him ought to produce the same effect on all living beings; but every man does and must expect and demand the universal acquiescence of all intelligent beings in every conviction of his understanding.

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FRAGMENT OF AN ESSAY ON BEAUTY. 1818.

THE only necessary, but this the absolutely necessary, pre-requisite to a full insight into the grounds of the beauty in the objects of sight, is—the directing of the attention to the action of those thoughts in our own mind which are not consciously distinguished. Every man may understand this, if he will but recall the state of his feelings in endeavouring to recollect a name, which he is quite sure that he remembers, though he cannot force it back into consciousness. This region of unconscious thoughts, oftentimes the more working the more indistinct they are, may, in reference to this subject, be conceived as forming an ascending scale from the most universal associations of motion with the functions and passions of life,—as when, on passing out of a crowded city into the fields on a day in June, we describe the grass and king-cups as nodding their heads and dancing in the breeze,—up to the half perceived, yet not fixable, resemblance of a form to some particular object of a diverse class, which resemblance we need only increase but a little, to destroy, or at least injure, its beauty-enhancing effect, and to make it a fantastic intrusion of the accidental and the arbitrary, and consequently a disturbance of the beautiful. This might be abundantly exemplified and illustrated from the paintings of Salvator Rosa.

I am now using the term beauty in its most comprehensive sense, as including expression and artistic interest,—that is, I consider not only the living balance, but likewise all the accompaniments that even by disturbing are necessary to the renewal and continuance of the balance. And in this sense I proceed to show, that the beautiful in the object may be referred to two elements,—lines and colours; the first belonging to the shapely (*forma, formalis, formosus*), and in this, to the law, and the reason; and the second, to the lively, the free, the spontaneous, and the self-justifying. As to lines, the rectilineal are in themselves the lifeless, the determined *ab extra*, but still in immediate union with the cycloidal, which are expressive of function. The curve line is a modification of the force from without

by the force from within, or the spontaneous. These are not arbitrary symbols, but the language of nature, universal and intuitive, by virtue of the law by which man is impelled to explain visible motions by imaginary causative powers analogous to his own acts, as the Dryads, Hamadryads, Naiads, &c.

The better way of applying these principles will be by a brief and rapid sketch of the history of the fine arts,—in which it will be found, that the beautiful in nature has been appropriated to the works of man, just in proportion as the state of the mind in the artists themselves approached to the subjective beauty. Determine what predominance in the minds of the men is preventive of the living balance of excited faculties, and you will discover the exact counterpart in the outward products. Egypt is an illustration of this. Shapeliness is intellect without freedom; but colours are significant. The introduction of the arch is not less an epoch in the fine than in the useful arts.

Order is beautiful arrangement without any purpose *ad extra*;—therefore there is a beauty of order, or order may be contemplated exclusively as beauty.

The form given in every empirical intuition,—the stuff, that is, the quality of the stuff, determines the agreeable: but when a thing excites us to receive it in such and such a mould, so that its exact correspondence to that mould is what occupies the mind,—this is taste or the sense of beauty. Whether dishes full of painted wood or exquisite viands were laid out on a table in the same arrangement, would be indifferent to the taste, as in ladies patterns; but surely the one is far more agreeable than the other. Hence observe the disinterestedness of all taste; and hence also a sensual perfection with intellect is occasionally possible without moral feeling. So it may be in music and painting, but not in poetry. How far it is a real preference of the refined to the gross pleasures, is another question, upon the supposition that pleasure, in some form or other, is that alone which determines men to the objects of the former:—whether experience does not show that if the latter were equally in our power, occasioned no more trouble to enjoy, and caused no more exhaustion of the power of enjoying them by the enjoyment itself, we should in real practice prefer the grosser pleasure. It is not, therefore, any excellence in the quality of the refined pleasures themselves,

but the advantages and facilities in the means of enjoying them, that give them the pre-eminence.

This is, of course, on the supposition of the absence of all moral feeling. Suppose its presence, and then there will accrue an excellence even to the quality of the pleasures themselves; not only, however, of the refined, but also of the grosser kinds,—inasmuch as a larger sweep of thoughts will be associated with each enjoyment, and with each thought will be associated a number of sensations; and so, consequently, each pleasure will become more the pleasure of the whole being. This is one of the earthly rewards of our being what we ought to be, but which would be annihilated, if we attempted to be it for the sake of this increased enjoyment. Indeed it is a contradiction to suppose it. Yet this is the common *argumentum in circulo*, in which the eudæmonists flee and pursue.

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NOTES ON CHAPMAN'S HOMER.

Extract of a Letter sent with the Volume.[1] 1807.

CHAPMAN I have sent in order that you might read the Odyssey; the Iliad is fine, but less equal in the translation, as well as less interesting in itself. What is stupidly said of Shakspeare, is really true and appropriate of Chapman; mighty faults counterpoised by mighty beauties. Excepting his quaint epithets which he affects to render literally from the Greek, a language above all others blest in the "happy marriage of sweet words," and which in our language are mere printer's compound epithets—such as quaffed divine joy-*in-the-heart-of-man-infusing* wine, (the undermarked is to be one word, because one sweet mellifluous word expresses it in Homer);—excepting this, it has no look, no air, of a translation. It is as truly an original poem as the Faery Queene;—it will give you small idea of Homer, though a far truer one than Pope's epigrams, or Cowper's cumbersome most anti-Homeric Miltonism. For Chapman writes and feels as a poêt,—as Homer might have written had he lived in England in the reign of Queen Elizabeth. In short, it is an exquisite poem, in spite of its frequent and perverse quaintnesses and harsh-

[1] Communicated through Mr. Wordsworth. *Ed.*

nesses, which are, however, amply repaid by almost unexampled sweetness and beauty of language, all over spirit and feeling. In the main it is an English heroic poem, the tale of which is borrowed from the Greek. The dedication to the Iliad is a noble copy of verses, especially those sublime lines beginning,—

> O! 'tis wondrous much
> (Through nothing prisde) that the right vertuous touch
> Of a well written soule, to vertue moves.
> Nor haue we soules to purpose, if their loves
> Of fitting objects be not so inflam'd.
> How much then, were this kingdome's maine soul maim'd,
> To want this great inflamer of all powers
> That move in humane soules! All realmes but yours,
> Are honor'd with him; and hold blest that state
> That have his workes to reade and contemplate.
> In which, humanitie to her height is raisde;
> Which all the world (yet, none enough) hath praisde.
> Seas, earth, and heaven, he did in verse comprize;
> Out sung the Muses, and did equalise
> Their king Apollo; being so farre from cause
> Of princes light thoughts, that their gravest lawes
> May finde stufle to be fashioned by his lines.
> Through all the pompe of kingdomes still he shines
> And graceth all his gracers. Then let lie
> Your lutes, and viols, and more loftily
> Make the heroiques of your Homer sung,
> To drums and trumpets set his Angels tongue:
> And with the princely sports of haukes you use,
> Behold the kingly flight of his high Muse:
> And see how like the Phœnix she renues
> Her age, and starrie feathers in your sunne,
> Thousands of yeares attending; everie one
> Blowing the holy fire, and throwing in
> Their seasons, kingdomes, nations that have bin
> Subverted in them; lawes, religions, all
> Offerd to change, and greedie funerall;
> Yet still your Homer lasting, living, raigning.—

and likewise the 1st, the 11th, and last but one, of the prefatory sonnets to the Odyssey. Could I have foreseen any other speedy opportunity, I should have begged your acceptance of the volume in a somewhat handsomer coat; but as it is, it will better represent the sender,—to quote from myself—

> A man disherited, in form and face,
> By nature and mishap, of outward grace.

Chapman in his moral heroic verse, as in this dedication and the prefatory sonnets to his Odyssey, stands above

Ben Jonson; there is more dignity, more lustre, and equal strength; but not midway quite between him and the sonnets of Milton. I do not know whether I give him the higher praise, in that he reminds me of Ben Jonson with a sense of his superior excellence, or that he brings Milton to memory notwithstanding his inferiority. His moral poems are not quite out of books like Jonson's, nor yet do the sentiments so wholly grow up out of his own natural habit and grandeur of thought, as in Milton. The sentiments have been attracted to him by a natural affinity of his intellect, and so combined;—but Jonson has taken them by individual and successive acts of choice.

Dedication to Prince Henry.

All this and the preceding is well felt and vigorously, though harshly, expressed, respecting sublime poetry *in genere;* but in reading Homer I look about me, and ask how does all this apply here. For surely never was there plainer writing; there are a thousand charms of sun and moonbeam, ripple, and wave, and stormy billow, but all on the surface. Had Chapman read Proclus and Porphyry?—and did he really believe them,—or even that they believed themselves? They felt the immense power of a Bible, a Shaster, a Koran. There was none in Greece or Rome, and they tried therefore by subtle allegorical accommodations to conjure the poem of Homer into the *βίβλιον θεοπαράδοτον* of Greek faith.

Epistle Dedicatorie to the Odyssey.

Chapman's identification of his fate with Homer's, and his complete forgetfulness of the distinction between Christianity and idolatry, under the general feeling of some religion, is very interesting. It is amusing to observe, how familiar Chapman's fancy has become with Homer, his life and its circumstances, though the very existence of any such individual, at least with regard to the Iliad and the Hymns, is more than problematic. N.B. The rude engraving in the page was designed by no vulgar hand. It is full of spirit and passion.

Epistle Dedicatorie to the Batrachomyomachia.

I am so dull, that neither in the original nor in any translation could I ever find any wit or wise purpose in this poem. The whole humour seems to lie in the names. The frogs and mice are not frogs or mice, but men, and yet they do nothing that conveys any satire. In the Greek there is much beauty of language,

End of the Batrachomyomachia.

but the joke is very flat. This is always the case in rude ages;—their serious vein is inimitable,—their comic low and low indeed. The psychological cause is easily stated, and copiously exemplifiable.

NOTE IN CASAUBON'S PERSIUS.

1807.

THERE are six hundred and sixteen pages in this volume, of which twenty-two are text; and five hundred and ninety-four commentary and introductory matter. Yet when I recollect, that I have the whole works of Cicero, Livy, and Quinctilian, with many others,—the whole works of each in a single volume, either thick quarto with thin paper and small yet distinct print, or thick octavo or duodecimo of the same character, and that they cost me in the proportion of a shilling to a guinea for the same quantity of worse matter in modern books, or editions,—I am a poor man, yet one whom *βιβλίων κτήσεως ἐκ παιδαρίου δεινὸς ἐκράτησε τόθος*, feel the liveliest gratitude for the age, which produced such editions, and for the education, which by enabling me to understand and taste the Greek and Latin writers, has thus put it in my power to collect on my own shelves, for my actual use, almost all the best books in spite of my small income Somewhat too I am indebted to the ostentation of expense among the rich, which has occasioned these cheap editions to become so disproportionately cheap.

NOTES ON BARCLAY'S ARGENIS.

1803.[1]

HEAVEN forbid that this work should not exist in its present form and language! Yet I cannot avoid the wish that it had, during the reign of James I., been moulded into an heroic poem in English octave stanza, or epic blank verse;—which, however, at that time had not been invented, and which, alas! still remains the sole property of the inventor, as if the Muses had given him an unevadable patent for it. Of dramatic blank verse we have many

[1] Communicated by the Rev. Derwent Coleridge.

and various specimens;—for example, Shakspeare's as compared with Massinger's, both excellent in their kind:—of lyric, and of what may be called Orphic, or philosophic, blank verse, perfect models may be found in Wordsworth: of colloquial blank verse there are excellent, though not perfect, examples in Cowper;—but of epic blank verse, since Milton, there is not one.

It absolutely distresses me when I reflect that this work, admired as it has been by great men of all ages, and lately, I hear, by the poet Cowper, should be only not unknown to general readers. It has been translated into English two or three times—how, I know not, wretchedly, I doubt not. It affords matter for thought that the last translation (or rather, in all probability, miserable and faithless abridgment of some former one) was given under another name. What a mournful proof of the incelebrity of this great and amazing work among both the public and the people! For as Wordsworth, the greater of the two great men of this age, - (at least, except Davy and him, I have known, read of, heard of, no others)—for as Wordsworth did me the honour of once observing to me, the people and the public are two distinct classes, and, as things go, the former is likely to retain a better taste, the less it is acted on by the latter. Yet Telemachus is in every mouth, in every schoolboy's and schoolgirl's hand! It is awful to say of a work, like the Argenis, the style and Latinity of which, judged (not according to classical pedantry, which pronounces every sentence right which can be found in any book prior to Boetius, however vicious the age, or affected the author, and every sentence wrong, however natural and beautiful, which has been of the author's own combination, — but) according to the universal logic of thought as modified by feeling, is equal to that of Tacitus in energy and genuine conciseness, and is as perspicuous as that of Livy, whilst it is free from the affectations, obscurities, and lust to surprise of the former, and seems a sort of antithesis to the slowness and prolixity of the latter;—(this remark does not, however, impeach even the classicality of the language, which, when the freedom and originality, the easy motion and perfect command of the thoughts, are considered, is truly wonderful):—of such a work it is awful to say, that it would have been well if

it had been written in English or Italian verse! Yet the event seems to justify the notion. Alas! it is now too late. What modern work, even of the size of the Paradise Lost—much less of the Faery Queene—would be read in the present day, or even bought or be likely to be bought, unless it were an instructive work, as the phrase is, like Roscoe's quartos of Leo X., or entertaining like Boswell's three of Dr. Johnson's conversations? It may be fairly objected—what work of surpassing merit has given the proof?—Certainly, none. Yet still there are ominous facts, sufficient, I fear, to afford a certain prophecy of its reception, if such were produced.

NOTES ON CHALMERS'S LIFE OF SAMUEL DANIEL.

The justice of these remarks cannot be disputed, though some of them are too figurative for sober criticism.

MOST genuine! a figurative remark! If this strange writer had any meaning, it must be.—Headly's criticism is just throughout, but conveyed in a style too figurative for prose composition. Chalmers's own remarks are wholly mistaken; too silly for any criticism, drunk or sober, and in language too flat for any thing. In Daniel's Sonnets there is scarcely one good line; while his Hymen's Triumph, of which Chalmers says not one word, exhibits a continued series of first-rate beauties in thought, passion, and imagery, and in language and metre is so faultless, that the style of that poem may without extravagance be declared to be imperishable English. 1820.

BISHOP CORBET.

I ALMOST wonder that the inimitable humour, and the rich sound and propulsive movement of the verse, have not rendered Corbet a popular poet. I am convinced that a reprint of his poems, with illustrative and chit-chat biographical notes, and cuts by Cruikshank, would take with the public uncommonly well. September, 1823.

NOTES ON SELDEN'S TABLE TALK.[1]

THERE is more weighty bullion sense in this book, than I ever found in the same number of pages of any uninspired writer.

OPINION.

Opinion and affection extremely differ. I may affect a woman best, but it does not follow I must think her the handsomest woman in the world. * * * Opinion is something wherein I go about to give reason why all the world should think as I think Affection is a thing wherein I look after the pleasing of myself.

Good! This is the true difference betwixt the beautiful and the agreeable, which Knight and the rest of that πλῆθος ἄθεον have so beneficially confounded, *meretricibus scilicet et Plutoni.*

O what an insight the whole of this article gives into a wise man's heart, who has been compelled to act with the many, as one of the many! It explains Sir Thomas More's zealous Romanism, &c.

PARLIAMENT.

Excellent! O! to have been with Selden over his glass of wine, making every accident an outlet and a vehicle of wisdom!

POETRY.

The old poets had no other reason but this, their verse was sung to music; otherwise it had been a senseless thing to have fettered up themselves.

No man can know all things: even Selden here talks ignorantly. Verse is in itself a music, and the natural symbol of that union of passion with thought and pleasure, which constitutes the essence of all poetry, as contra-distinguished from science, and distinguished from history civil or natural. To Pope's Essay on Man, - in short, to whatever is mere metrical good sense and wit, the remark applies.

Ib.

Verse proves nothing but the quantity of syllables; they are not meant for logic.

[1] These remarks on Selden were communicated by Mr. Cary. *Ed.*

True; they, that is, verses, are not logic; but they are, or ought to be, the envoys and representatives of that vital passion, which is the practical cement of logic; and without which logic must remain inert.

NOTES ON TOM JONES.[1]

MANNERS change from generation to generation, and with manners morals appear to change,—actually change with some, but appear to change with all but the abandoned. A young man of the present day who should act as Tom Jones is supposed to act at Upton, with Lady Bellaston, &c. would not be a Tom Jones; and a Tom Jones of the present day, without perhaps being in the ground a better man, would have perished rather than submit to be kept by a harridan of fortune. Therefore this novel is, and, indeed, pretends to be, no exemplar of conduct. But, notwithstanding all this, I do loathe the cant which can recommend Pamela and Clarissa Harlowe as strictly moral, though they poison the imagination of the young with continued doses of *tinct. lyttæ*, while Tom Jones is prohibited as loose. I do not speak of young women;—but a young man whose heart or feelings can be injured, or even his passions excited, by aught in this novel, is already thoroughly corrupt. There is a cheerful, sun-shiny, breezy spirit that prevails everywhere, strongly contrasted with the close, hot, day-dreamy continuity of Richardson. Every indiscretion, every immoral act, of Tom Jones, (and it must be remembered that he is in every one taken by surprise—his inward principles remaining firm—) is so instantly punished by embarrassment and unanticipated evil consequences of his folly, that the reader's mind is not left for a moment to dwell or run riot on the criminal indulgence itself. In short, let the requisite allowance be made for the increased refinement of our manners,—and then I dare believe that no young man who consulted his heart and conscience only, without adverting to what the world would say—could rise from the perusal of Fielding's Tom Jones, Joseph Andrews, or Amelia, without feeling himself a better man;—at least, without an intense conviction that he could not be guilty of a base act.

[1] Communicated by Mr. Gillman. *Ed*

If I want a servant or mechanic, I wish to know what he does :—but of a friend, I must know what he is. And in no writer is this momentous distinction so finely brought forward as by Fielding. We do not care what Blifil does ;—the deed, as separate from the agent, may be good or ill ; but Blifil is a villain ;—and we feel him to be so from the very moment he, the boy Blifil, restores Sophia's poor captive bird to its native and rightful liberty.

Book xiv. ch. 8.

Notwithstanding the sentiment of the Roman satirist, which denies the divinity of fortune ; and the opinion of Seneca to the same purpose ; Cicero, who was, I believe, a wiser man than either of them, expressly holds the contrary ; and certain it is there are some incidents in life so very strange and unaccountable, that it seems to require more than human skill and foresight in producing them.

Surely Juvenal, Seneca, and Cicero, all meant the same thing, namely, that there was no chance, but instead of it providence, either human or divine.

Book xv. ch. 9.

The rupture with Lady Bellaston.

Even in the most questionable part of Tom Jones, I cannot but think, after frequent reflection, that an additional paragraph, more fully and forcibly unfolding Tom Jones's sense of self-degradation on the discovery of the true character of the relation in which he had stood to Lady Bellaston, and his awakened feeling of the dignity of manly chastity, would have removed in great measure any just objections,—at all events relatively to Fielding himself, and with regard to the state of manners in his time.

Book xvi. ch. 5.

That refined degree of Platonic affection which is absolutely detached from the flesh, and is indeed entirely and purely spiritual, is a gift confined to the female part of the creation ; many of whom I have heard declare (and doubtless with great truth) that they would, with the utmost readiness, resign a lover to a rival, when such resignation was proved to be necessary for the temporal interest of such lover.

I firmly believe that there are men capable of such a sacrifice, and this, without pretending to, or even admiring or seeing any virtue in, this absolute detachment from the flesh.

ANOTHER SET OF NOTES ON TOM JONES.

Book i. ch. 4.

"Beyond this the country gradually rose into a ridge of wild mountains, the tops of which were above the clouds."

As this is laid in Somersetshire, the clouds must have been unusually low. One would be more apt to think of Skiddaw or Ben Nevis, than of Quantock or Mendip Hills.

Book xi. ch. 1.

"Nor can the Devil receive a guest more worthy of him, nor possibly more welcome to him than a slanderer."

The very word Devil, *Diabolus*, means a slanderer.

Book xii. ch. 12.

"And here we will make a concession, which would not perhaps have been expected from us; That no limited form of government is capable of rising to the same degree of perfection, or of producing the same benefits to society with this. Mankind has never been so happy, as when the greatest part of the then known world was under the dominion of a single master; and this state of their felicity continued under the reign of five successive Princes."

Strange that such a lover of political liberty as Fielding should have forgotten that the glaring infamy of the Roman morals and manners immediately on the ascent of Commodus prove, that even five excellent despots in succession were but a mere temporary palliative of the evils inherent in despotism and its causes. Think you that all the sub-despots were Trojans and Antonines? No! Rome was left as it was found by them, incapable of freedom.

Book xviii. ch. 4.

Plato himself concludes his Phædon with declaring, that his best argument amounts only to raise a probability; and Cicero himself seems rather to profess an inclination to believe, than any actual belief, in the doctrines of immortality.

No! Plato does not say so, but speaks as a philosophic Christian would do of the best arguments of the scientific intellect. The assurance is derived from a higher principle. If this be Methodism Plato and Socrates were arrant

Methodists and New Light men; but I would ask Fielding what ratiocinations do more than raise a high degree of probability. But assuredly an historic belief is far different from Christian *faith*.

No greater proof can be conceived of the strength of the instinctive anticipation of a future state than that it was believed at all by the Greek Philosophers, with their vague and (Plato excepted) Pantheistic conception of the First Cause. S. T. C.

JONATHAN WILD.[1]

JONATHAN WILD is assuredly the best of all the fictions in which a villain is throughout the prominent character. But how impossible it is by any force of genius to create a sustained attractive interest for such a ground-work, and how the mind wearies of, and shrinks from, the more than painful interest, the μισητὸν, of utter depravity,—Fielding himself felt and endeavoured to mitigate and remedy by the (on all other principles) far too large a proportion, and too quick recurrence, of the interposed chapters of moral reflection, like the chorus in the Greek tragedy,—admirable specimens as these chapters are of profound irony and philosophic satire. Chap. VI. Book 2, on Hats,[2]—brief as it is, exceeds any thing even in Swift's Lilliput, or Tale of the Tub. How forcibly it applies to the Whigs, Tories, and Radicals of our own times.

Whether the transposition of Fielding's scorching wit (as B. III. c. xiv) to the mouth of his hero be objectionable on the ground of *incredulus odi*, or is to be admired as answering the author's purpose by unrealizing the story, in order to give a deeper reality to the truths intended,—I must leave doubtful, yet myself inclining to the latter judgment. 27th Feb. 1832

[1] Communicated by Mr Gillman. *Ed.*

[2] 'In which our hero makes a speech well worthy to be celebrated; and the behaviour of one of the gang, perhaps more unnatural than any other part of this history.'

NOTES ON JUNIUS. 1807.

Stat nominis umbra.

As he never dropped the mask, so he too often used the poisoned dagger of an assassin.

Dedication to the English nation.

The whole of this dedication reads like a string of aphorisms arranged in chapters, and classified by a resemblance of subject, or a cento of points.

Ib. If an honest, and I may truly affirm a laborious, zeal for the public service has given me any weight in your esteem, let me exhort and conjure you never to suffer an invasion of your political constitution, however minute the instance may appear, to pass by, without a determined persevering resistance.

A longer sentence and proportionately inelegant.

Ib. If you reflect that in the changes of administration which have marked and disgraced the present reign, although your warmest patriots have, in their turn, been invested with the lawful and unlawful authority of the crown, and though other reliefs or improvements have been held forth to the people, yet that no one man in office has ever promoted or encouraged a bill for shortening the duration of parliaments, but that (whoever was minister) the opposition to this measure, ever since the septennial act passed, has been constant and uniform on the part of government.

Long, and as usual, inelegant. Junius cannot manage a long sentence; it has all the *ins* and *outs* of a snappish figure-dance.

Preface.

An excellent preface, and the sentences not so snipt as in the dedication. The paragraph near the conclusion beginning with "some opinion may now be expected," &c. and ending with "relation between guilt and punishment," deserves to be quoted as a master-piece of rhetorical ratiocination in a series of questions that permit no answer; or (as Junius says) carry their own answer along with them. The great art of Junius is never to say too much, and to avoid with equal anxiety a common-place manner, and matter that is not common-place. If ever he deviates into any originality of thought, he takes care that it shall be such as excites surprise for its acuteness, rather than admira-

tion for its profundity. He takes care? say rather that nature took care for him. It is impossible to detract from the merit of these Letters: they are suited to their purpose, and perfect in their kind. They impel to action, not thought. Had they been profound or subtle in thought, or majestic and sweeping in composition, they would have been adapted for the closet of a Sydney, or for a House of Lords such as it was in the time of Lord Bacon; but they are plain and sensible whenever the author is in the right, and whether right or wrong, always shrewd and epigrammatic, and fitted for the coffee-house, the exchange, the lobby of the House of Commons, and to be read aloud at a public meeting. When connected, dropping the forms of connexion, desultory without abruptness or appearance of disconnexion, epigrammatic and antithetical to excess, sententious and personal, regardless of right or wrong, yet well-skilled to act the part of an honest warm-hearted man, and even when he is in the right, saying the truth but never proving it, much less attempting to bottom it,—this is the character of Junius;—and on this character, and in the mould of these writings must every man cast himself, who would wish in factious times to be the important and long remembered agent of a faction. I believe that I could do all that Junius has done, and surpass him by doing many things which he has not done: for example,—by an occasional induction of startling facts, in the manner of Tom Paine, and lively illustrations and witty applications of good stories and appropriate anecdotes in the manner of Horne Tooke. I believe I could do it if it were in my nature to aim at this sort of excellence, or to be enamoured of the fame, and immediate influence, which would be its consequence and reward. But it is not in my nature. I not only love truth, but I have a passion for the legitimate investigation of truth. The love of truth conjoined with a keen delight in a strict and skilful yet impassioned argumentation, is my master-passion, and to it are subordinated even the love of liberty and all my public feelings—and to it whatever I labour under of vanity, ambition, and all my inward impulses.

Letter I. From this Letter all the faults and excellencies of Junius may be exemplified. The moral and political aphorisms are just and sensible, the irony in which his personal satire is conveyed is fine, yet always intellig-

ible ; but it approaches too nearly to the nature of a sneer ; the sentences are cautiously constructed without the forms of connection ; the *he* and *it* every where substituted for the *who* and *which ;* the sentences are short, laboriously balanced, and the antitheses stand the test of analysis much better than Johnson's. These are all excellencies in their kind ;—where is the defect ? In this ;—there is too much of each, and there is a defect of many things, the presence of which would have been not only valuable for their own sakes, but for the relief and variety which they would have given. It is observable too that every Letter adds to the faults of these Letters, while it weakens the effect of their beauties.

L. III. A capital letter, addressed to a private person, and intended as a sharp reproof for intrusion. Its short sentences, its witty perversions and deductions, its questions and omissions of connectives, all in their proper places are dramatically good.

L. V. For my own part, I willingly leave it to the public to determine whether your vindication of your friend has been as able and judicious as it was certainly well intended ; and you, I think, may be satisfied with the warm acknowledgments he already owes you for making him the principal figure in a piece in which, but for your amicable assistance, he might have passed without particular notice or distinction.

A long sentence and, as usual, inelegant and cumbrous. This Letter is a faultless composition with exception of the one long sentence.

L. VII. These are the gloomy companions of a disturbed *imagination ;* the melancholy madness of poetry, without the *inspiration.*

The rhyme is a fault. 'Fancy' had been better ; though but for the rhyme, imagination is the fitter word.

Ib. Such a question might perhaps discompose the gravity of his muscles, but I believe it would little affect the tranquillity of his conscience.

A false antithesis, a mere verbal balance ; there are far, far too many of these. However, with these few exceptions, this Letter is a blameless composition. Junius may be safely studied as a model for letters where he truly writes letters. Those to the Duke of Grafton and others, are small pamphlets in the form of letters.

L. VIII. **To do justice to your Grace's humanity, you felt for Mac Quick as you ought to do; and, if you had been contented to assist him indirectly, without a notorious denial of justice, or openly insulting the sense of the nation, you might have satisfied every duty of political friendship, without committing the honour of your sovereign, or hazarding the reputation of his government.**

An inelegant cluster of *withouts*. Junius asks questions incomparably well;—but *ne quid nimis*.

L. IX. Perhaps the fair way of considering these Letters would be as a kind of satirical poems; the short, and for ever balanced, sentences constitute a true metre; and the connexion is that of satiric poetry, a witty logic, an association of thoughts by amusing semblances of cause and effect, the sophistry of which the reader has an interest in not stopping to detect, for it flatters his love of mischief, and makes the sport.

L. XII. One of Junius's arts, and which gives me a high notion of his genius, as a poet and satirist, is this:—he takes for granted the existence of a character that never did and never can exist, and then employs his wit, and surprises and amuses his readers with analyzing its incompatibilities.

L. XIV. Continual sneer, continual irony, all excellent, if it were not for the 'all';—but a countenance, with a malignant smile in statuary fixure on it, becomes at length an object of aversion, however beautiful the face, and however beautiful the smile. We are relieved, in some measure, from this by frequent just and well expressed moral aphorisms; but then the preceding and following irony gives them the appearance of proceeding from the head, not from the heart. This objection would be less felt, when the Letters were first published at considerable intervals; but Junius wrote for posterity.

L. XXIII. Sneer and irony continued with such gross violation of good sense, as to be perfectly nonsense. The man who can address another on his most detestable vices in a strain of cold continual irony, is himself a wretch.

L. XXXV. **To honour them with a determined predilection and confidence in exclusion of your English subjects, who placed your family, and, in spite of treachery and rebellion, have supported it upon the throne, is a mistake too gross even for the unsuspecting generosity of youth.**

The words 'upon the throne,' stand unfortunately for

the harmonious effect of the balance of 'placed' and 'supported.'

This address to the king is almost faultless in composition, and has been evidently tormented with the file. But it has fewer beauties than any other long letter of Junius; and it is utterly undramatic. There is nothing in the style, the transitions, or the sentiments, which represents the passions of a man emboldening himself to address his sovereign personally. Like a Presbyterian's prayer, you may substitute almost every where the third for the second person without injury. The newspaper, his closet, and his own person were alone present to the author's intention and imagination. This makes the composition vapid. It possesses an Isocratic correctness, when it should have had the force and drama of an oration of Demosthenes. From this, however, the paragraph beginning with the words 'As to the Scotch,' and also the last two paragraphs must be honourably excepted. They are, perhaps, the finest passages in the whole collection.

WONDERFULNESS OF PROSE.

It has just struck my feelings that the Pherecydean origin of prose being granted, prose must have struck men with greater admiration than poetry. In the latter it was the language of passion and emotion: it is what they themselves spoke and heard in moments of exultation, indignation, &c. But to hear an evolving roll, or a succession of leaves, talk continually the language of deliberate reason in a form of continued preconception, of a Z already possessed when A was being uttered,— this must have appeared godlike. I feel myself in the same state, when in the perusal of a sober, yet elevated and harmonious succession of sentences and periods, I abstract my mind from the particular passage and sympathize with the wonder of the common people, who say of an eloquent man,—'He talks like a book!'

NOTES ON HERBERT'S TEMPLE AND HARVEY'S SYNAGOGUE.

G. HERBERT is a true poet, but a poet *sui generis*, the merits of whose poems will never be felt without a sympathy with the mind and character of the man. To appreciate this volume, it is not enough that the reader possesses a cultivated judgment, classical taste, or even poetic sensibility, unless he be likewise a *Christian*, and both a zealous and an orthodox, both a devout and a *devotional* Christian. But even this will not quite suffice. He must be an affectionate and dutiful child of the Church, and from habit, conviction, and a constitutional predisposition to ceremoniousness, in piety as in manners, find her forms and ordinances aids of religion, not sources of formality; for religion is the element in which he lives, and the region in which he moves.

The Church, say rather the Churchmen of England, under the two first Stuarts, has been charged with a yearning after the Romish fopperies, and even the papistic usurpations; but we shall decide more correctly, as well as more charitably, if for the Romish and papistic we substitute the patristic leaven. There even was (natural enough from their distinguished learning, and knowledge of ecclesiastical antiquities) an overrating of the Church and of the Fathers, for the first five or even six centuries; these lines on the Egyptian monks, "Holy Macarius and great Anthony" (p. 205) supply a striking instance and illustration of this.

P. 10.

> If thou be single, all thy goods and ground
> Submit to love; but yet not more than all.
> Give one estate as one life. None is bound
> To work for two, who brought himself to thrall.
> God made me one man; love makes me no more,
> Till labour come, and make my weakness score.

I do not understand this stanza.

P. 41.

> My flesh *began unto my soul* in pain,
> Sicknesses clave my bones, &c.

Either a misprint, or a noticeable idiom of the word

"began?" Yes! and a very beautiful idiom it is: the first colloquy or address of the flesh.

P. 46.

What though my body run to dust?
Faith cleaves unto it, counting every grain,
With an exact and most particular trust,
Reserving all for flesh again.

I find few historical facts so difficult of solution as the continuance, in Protestantism, of this anti-scriptural superstition.

P. 54. Second poem on *The Holy Scriptures.*

This verse marks that, and both do make a motion
Unto a third that ten leaves off doth lie.

The spiritual unity of the Bible – the order and connection of organic forms in which the unity of life is shewn, though as widely dispersed in the world of sight as the text.

Ib.

Then as dispersed herbs do *watch* a potion,
These three make up some Christian's destiny.

Some misprint.

P. 87.

Sweet Spring, full of sweet days and roses,
A *box* where sweets compacted lie.

Nest.

P. 92. *Man.*

Each thing is full of duty:
Waters united are our navigation:
Distinguished, our habitation;
Below, our drink; above, our meat:
Both are our cleanliness. Hath one such beauty?
Then how are all things neat!

'Distinguished.' I understand this but imperfectly. Did they form an island? and the next lines refer perhaps to the then belief that all fruits grow and are nourished by water. But then how is the ascending sap "our cleanliness?" Perhaps, therefore, the rains.

P. 140.

But he doth bid us take his blood for wine.

Nay, the contrary; take wine to be blood, and *the* blood of a man who died 1800 years ago. This is the faith

which even the Church of England demands;[1] for consubstantiation only *adds* a mystery to that of Transubstantiation, which it implies.

P. 175. The Flower.

A delicious poem.

Ib.

How fresh, O Lord, how sweet and clear
Are thy returns! e'en as the flowers in spring;
To which, besides their own demean,
The late past frosts tributes of pleasure bring.
Grief melts away.
Like snow in May,
As if there were no such cold thing.

"The late-past frosts tributes of pleasure bring."

∪ – – – — — — ∪∪ — ∪ — —

Epitritus primus + Dactyl + Trochee + a long word —syllable, which, together with the pause intervening between it and the word—trochee, equals ∪∪∪ - form a pleasing variety in the Pentameter Iambic with rhymes. Ex. gr.

Thĕ lāte pāst frōsts | tributĕs ŏf | plēāsūre | bring.

N.B. First, the difference between -∪ | —and an amphimacer - ∪ - | and this not always or necessarily arising out of the latter being one word. It may even consist of three words, yet the effect be the same. It is the pause that makes the difference. Secondly, the expediency, if not necessity, that the first syllable both of the Dactyl and the Trochee should be short by quantity, and only = - by force of accent or position—the Epitrite being true *lengths*. —Whether the last syllable be - or = - the force of the rhymes renders indifferent. Thus, ...

[1] This is one of my father's *marginalia*, which I can hardly persuade myself he would have re-written just as it stands. Where does the Church of England affirm that the wine *per se* literally *is* the blood shed 1800 years ago? The language of our Church is that "we receiving these creatures of bread and wine, &c. may be partakers of His most blessed body and blood:" that "to such as rightly receive the same the cup of blessing is a partaking of the blood of Christ." Does not this language intimate, that the blood of Christ is spiritually produced in the soul through a faithful reception of the appointed symbols, rather than that the wine itself, apart from the soul, has become the blood? In one sense, indeed, it *is* the blood of Christ to the soul: it may be metaphorically called so, if, by means of it, the blood is *really*, though spiritually, partaken. More than this is surely not affirmed in our formularies, nor taught by our great divines in general. I do not write these words by way of *argument*, but because I cannot re-print such a note of my father's, which has excited surprise in some of his studious readers, without a protest. S. C.

"As if there *were no such cold thing.*" Had been no such thing.

P. 181.

Thou who condemnest Jewish hate, &c.
Call home thine eye, (that busy wanderer,)
That choice may be thy story.

Their choice.

P. 184.

Nay, thou dost make me sit and dine
Even in my enemies' sight.

Foemen's.

P. 201. *Judgment.*

Almighty Judge, how shall poor wretches brook
Thy dreadful look, &c.

What others mean to do, I know not well;
Yet I here tell,
That some will turn thee to some leaver therein
So void of sin,
That they in merit shall excel.

I should not have expected from Herbert so open an avowal of Romanism in the article of *merit*. In the same spirit is "Holy Macarius, and great Anthony," p. 205.[1]

P. 237. The *Communion Table.*

And for the matter whereof it is made,
The matter is not much,
Although it be of *tuch*,
Or wood, or metal, what will last, or fade;
So vanity
And superstition avoided be.

[1] Herbert however adds,

"But I resolve, when thou shalt call for mine,
That to decline,
And thrust a Testament into thy hand
Let that be scann'd;
There thou shalt find my faults are thine."

Martin Luther himself might have penned this concluding stanza.

Since I wrote the above, a note in Mr Pickering's edition of Herbert has been pointed out to me

"The Rev. Dr. *Bliss* has kindly furnished the following judicious remark, and which is proved to be correct, as the word is printed 'heare' in the first edition (1633)." He says, "Let me take this opportunity of mentioning what a very learned and able friend pointed out on this note. The fact is, *Coleridge* has been misled by an error of the press

What others mean to do, I know not well,
Yet I here tell, &c. &c.

should be *hear tell.* The sense is then obvious, and *Herbert* is not made to do that which he was the last man in the world to have done, namely, to avow 'Romanism in the article of merit.'"

This suggestion once occurred to myself, and appears to be right, as it is verified by the first edition: but at the time it seemed to me so obvious, that surely the correction would have been made before if there had not been some reason against it. S. C.

Tuch rhyming to *much*, from the German *tuch*, cloth, I never met with before, as an English word. So I find *platt* for *foliage* in Stanley's Hist. of Philosophy, p. 22.

P. 252. *The Synagogue*, by Christopher Harvey.

The Bishop.

> But who can show of old that ever any
> Presbyteries without their bishops were:
> *Though bishops without presbyteries many*, &c.

An instance of *proving too much*. If "Bishop without Presb. B. = Presb. i.e. no Bishop.

P. 253. The *Bishop*.

> To rule and to be ruled are distinct,
> And several duties, severally belong
> To several *persons*.

Functions of times, but not persons, of necessity? Ex. Bishop to Archbishop.

P. 255. *Church Festivals.*

> Who loves not you, doth but in vain profess
> That he loves God, or heaven, or happiness.

Equally unthinking and uncharitable;—I approve of them;—but yet remember Roman Catholic idolatry, and that it originated in such high-flown metaphors as these.

P. 255. *The Sabbath, or Lord's Day.*

Hail	Vail
Holy	Wholly
King of days, &c.	To thy praise, &c.

Make it sense and lose the rhyme; or make it rhyme and lose the sense.

P. 258. *The Nativity*, or *Christmas Day.*

> Unfold thy face, unmask thy ray,
> Shine forth, bright sun, double the day,
> Let no malignant misty fume, &c.

The only poem in *The Synagogue* which possesses *poetic* merit; with a few changes and additions this would be a striking poem.

Substitute the following for the fifth to the eighth line.

> To sheath or blunt one happy ray,
> That wins new splendour from the day.
> This day that gives thee power to rise,
> And shine on hearts as well as eyes:

This birth-day of all souls, when first
On eyes of flesh and blood did burst
That primal great lucific light,
That rays to thee, to us gave sight.

P. 267. *Whit-Sunday.*

Nay, startle not to hear that rushing wind,
Wherewith this place is shaken, &c.

To hear at once so great variety
Of language from them come, &c.

The spiritual miracle was the descent of the Holy Ghost: the outward the wind and the tongues: and so St. Peter himself explains it. That each individual obtained the power of speaking all languages, is neither contained in, nor fairly deducible from, St. Luke's account.

P. 269. *Trinity Sunday.*

The Trinity
In Unity,
And Unity
In Trinity,
All reason doth *transcend.*

Most true, but not *contradict.* Reason is to faith, as the eye to the telescope.

EXTRACT FROM A LETTER

OF S. T. COLERIDGE TO W. COLLINS, R.A.
PRINTED IN THE LIFE OF COLLINS
BY HIS SON. VOL. I.

December, 1818.

To feel the full force of the Christian religion it is perhaps necessary, for many tempers, that they should first be made to feel, experimentally, the hollowness of human friendship, the presumptuous emptiness of human hopes. I find more substantial comfort now in pious George Herbert's Temple, which I used to read to amuse myself with his quaintness, in short, only to laugh at, than in all the poetry since the poems of Milton. If you have not read Herbert I can recommend the book to you confidently. The poem entitled "The Flower" is especially

affecting, and to me such a phrase as "*and relish versing*" expresses a sincerity and reality, which I would unwillingly exchange for the more dignified "and once more love the Muse," &c. and so with many other of Herbert's homely phrases.

NOTES ON MATHIAS' EDITION OF GRAY.

On a distant prospect of Eton College.

Vol. i. p. 9.

> Wanders the hoary Thames along
> His silver-winding way. GRAY

WE want, methinks, a little treatise from some man of flexible good sense, and well versed in the Greek poets, especially Homer, the choral, and other lyrics, containing first a history of compound epithets, and then the laws and licenses. I am not so much disposed as I used to be to quarrel with such an epithet as "silver-winding;" ungrammatical as the hyphen is, it is not wholly *illogical*, for the phrase conveys more than silvery and winding. It gives, namely, the unity of the impression, the coinherence of the brightness, the motion, and the line of motion.

P. 10.

> Say, Father Thames, for thou hast seen
> Full many a sprightly race
> Disporting on thy margent green,
> The paths of pleasure trace;
> Who foremost now delight to cleave,
> With pliant arm, thy glassy wave?
> The captive linnet which enthral?
> What idle progeny succeed
> To chase the rolling circle's speed,
> Or urge the flying ball? GRAY.

This is the only stanza that appears to me very objectionable in point of diction. This, I must confess, is not only *falsetto* throughout, but is at once harsh and feeble, and very far the worst ten lines in all the works of Mr. Gray, English or Latin, prose or verse.

P. 12.

And envy wan, and faded care,[1]
Grim-visaged comfortless despair,[2]
And sorrow's piercing dart.[3]

[1] Bad in the first, [2] in the second, [3] in the last degree.

P. 15.

The proud are taught to *taste of pain*. GRAY.

There is a want of dignity—a sort of irony in this phrase to my feeling that would be more proper in dramatic than in lyric composition.

On Gray's *Platonica*, vol. I. p. 299.—547.

Whatever might be expected from a scholar, a gentleman, a man of exquisite taste, as the quintessence of sane and sound good sense, Mr. Gray appears to me to have performed. The poet Plato, the orator Plato, Plato the exquisite dramatist of conversation, the seer and the painter of character, Plato the high-bred, highly-educated, aristocratic republican, the man and the gentleman of quality stands full before us from behind the curtain as Gray has drawn it back. Even so does Socrates, the social wise old man, the *practical* moralist. But Plato the philosopher, but the divine Plato, was not to be comprehended within the field of vision, or be commanded by the fixed immoveable telescope of Mr. Locke's human understanding. The whole sweep of the best philosophic reflections of French or English fabric in the age of our scholarly bard, was not commensurate with the mighty orb. The little, according to *my* convictions at least, the very little of proper Platonism contained in the *written* books of Plato, who himself, in an epistle, the authenticity of which there is no tenable ground for doubting, as I was rejoiced to find Mr. Gray acknowledge, has declared all he had written to be substantially Socratic, and not a fair exponent of his own tenets,[1] even this little, Mr. Gray has either misconceived or honestlyconfessed that,as he was not one of the initiated, it was utterly beyond his comprehension. Finally, to repeat the explanation with which I closed the last page of these notes and extracts,

Volsimi ———— e vidi Plato
(ma non quel Plato)

[1] See Plato's second epistle *φραστέον δή σοι δι' αινιγμων κ. τ. λ.* and towards the end *τὰ δε νῦν λεγόμενα Σωκρᾶτους ἐστί, κ. τ. λ.* See also the 7th Epistle, p. 341.

Che'n quella schiera andò più presso al segno,
Al qual' aggiunge, a chi dal Cielo è dato.[1]
S. T. Coleridge, 1819.

P. 385. Hippias Major.

We learn from this dialogue in how poor a condition the art of reasoning on moral and abstracted subjects was before the time of Socrates: for it is impossible that Plato should introduce a sophist of the first reputation for eloquence and knowledge in several kinds, talking in a manner below the absurdity and weakness of a child; unless he had really drawn after the life. No less than twenty-four pages are here spent in vain, only to force it into the head of Hippias that there is such a thing as a general idea; and that, before we can dispute on any subject, we should give a definition of it.

Is not this, its improbability out of the question, contradicted by the Protagoras of Plato's own drawing? Are there no authors, no physicians in London at the present moment, of "the first reputation," i.e. whom a certain class cry up: for in no other sense is the phrase *historically* applicable to Hippias, whom a Sydenham redivivus or a new Stahl might not exhibit as pompous ignoramuses? no *one* Hippias amongst them? But we need not flee to conjectures. The ratiocination assigned by Aristotle and Plato himself to Gorgias and then to the Eleatic School, are positive proofs that Mr. Gray has mistaken the satire of an individual for a characteristic of an age or class.

May I dare whisper to the reeds without proclaiming that I am in the state of Midas,– may I dare to hint that Mr. Gray himself had not, and through the spectacles of Mr. Locke and his followers, could not have seen the difficulties which Hippias found in a *general* idea, *secundum Platonem?* S. T. C.

P. 386. Notes 289. Passages of Heraclitus.

Πιθηκῶν ὁ κάλλιστος αἰσχρὸς ἄλλῳ γένει συμβαλεῖν. –
Ἀνθρώπων ὁ σοφώτατος πρὸς Θεὸν πιθηκὸς φανεῖται.

This latter passage is undoubtedly the original of that famous thought in Pope's Essay on Man, B. 2

'And shewed a Newton as we shew an ape"

I remember to have met nearly the same words in one of our elder Poets.

P. 390—91.

That a sophist was a kind of merchant, or rather a retailer of

[1] Petrarch's *Trionfo della Fama*, cap. terz. v. 46.

food for the soul, and, like other shopkeepers, would exert his eloquence to recommend his own goods. The misfortune was, we could not carry them off, like corporeal viands, set them by a while, and consider them at leisure, whether they were wholesome or not, before we tasted them: that in this case we have no vessel but the soul to receive them in, which will necessarily retain a tincture, and perhaps, much to its prejudice, of all which is instilled into it.

Query, if Socrates, himself a scholar of the sophists, is accurate, did not the change of ὁ σοφός into ὁ Σοφιστής, in the single case of Solon, refer to the wisdom-causing influences of his legislation? Mem:—to examine whether Φρονιστής was, or was not, more generally used at first *in malum sensum*, or rather the proper force originally of the termination ιστής, ίστής—whether (as it is evidently verbal) it imply a reflex or a transitive act.

P. 390. Ὅτι Ἀμαθία.

This is the true key and great moral of the dialogue, that knowledge alone is the source of virtue, and ignorance the source of vice; it was Plato's own principle, see Plat. Epist. 7. p. 336. Ἀμαθία, ἐξ ἧς πάντα κακὰ πᾶσιν ἐῤῥίζωται καὶ βλαστάνει καὶ εἰς ὕστερον ἀποτελεῖ καρπὸν τοῖς γεννήσασι πικρότατον. See also *Sophist.* p 228 and 229, and *Euthydemus* from p. 278 to 281, and *De Legib.* L. 3. p. 688.) and probably it was also the principle of Socrates: the consequence of it is, that virtue may be taught, and may be acquired: and that philosophy alone can point us out the way to it.

More than our word, Ignorance, is contained in the Ἀμαθία of Plato. I, however, freely acknowledge, that this was the point of view, from which Socrates did *for the most part* contemplate moral good and evil. Now and then he seems to have taken a higher station, but soon quitted it for the lower, more generally intelligible. Hence the vacillation of Socrates himself: hence, too, the immediate opposition of his disciples, Antisthenes and Aristippus. But that this was Plato's own principle I exceedingly doubt. That it was not the principle of Platonism, as taught by the first Academy under Speusippus, I do *not* doubt at all. See the xivth Essay, p. 129-39 of *The Friend*, vol. i. In the sense in which ἀμαθίας πάντα κακὰ ἐῤῥίζωται, κ.τ.λ. is maintained in that Essay, so and no otherwise can it be truly asserted, and so and no otherwise did ὡς ἐμοί γε δοκεῖ, Plato teach it.

BARRY CORNWALL.[1]

BARRY CORNWALL is a poet, *me saltem judice:* and in that sense of the term, in which I apply it to C. Lamb and W. Wordsworth. There are poems of great merit, the authors of which I should yet not feel impelled so to designate.

The faults of these poems are no less things of hope, than the beauties; both are just what they ought to be,—that is, now.

If B. C. be faithful to his genius, it in due time will warn him, that as poetry is the identity of all other knowledges, so a poet cannot be a great poet, but as being likewise inclusively an historian and naturalist, in the light, as well as the life, of philosophy: all other men's worlds are his chaos.

Hints *obiter* are: -not to permit delicacy and exquisiteness to seduce into effeminacy. Not to permit beauties by repetition to become mannerisms. To be jealous of fragmentary composition,--as epicurism of genius, and apple-pie made all of quinces. *Item*, that dramatic poetry must be poetry hid in thought and passion,—not thought or passion disguised in the dress of poetry. Lastly, to be economic and withholding in similes, figures, &c. They will all find their place, sooner or later, each as the luminary of a sphere of its own. There can be no galaxy in poetry, because it is language,—*ergo* processive,—*ergo* every the smallest star must be seen singly.

There are not five metrists in the kingdom, whose works are known by me, to whom I could have held myself allowed to have spoken so plainly. But B. C. is a man of genius, and it depends on himself—(competence protecting him from gnawing or distracting cares)—to become a rightful poet,—that is, a great man.

Oh! for such a man worldly prudence is transfigured into the highest spiritual duty! How generous is self-interest in him, whose true self is all that is good and hopeful in all ages, as far as the language of Spenser, Shakspeare, and Milton shall become the mother-tongue!

A map of the road to Paradise, drawn in Purgatory, on the confines of Hell, by S. T. C. July 30, 1819.

[1] Written in Mr. Lamb's copy of the 'Dramatic Scenes.' *Ed.*

ON THE MODE OF STUDYING KANT.

EXTRACT FROM A LETTER OF MR. COLERIDGE TO J. GOODEN, ESQ.[1]

ACCEPT my thanks for the rules of the harmony. I perceive that the members are chiefly merchants; but yet it were to be wished, that such an enlargement of the society could be brought about as, retaining all its present purposes, might add to them the groundwork of a library of northern literature, and by bringing together the many gentlemen who are attached to it be the means of eventually making both countries better acquainted with the valuable part of each other; especially, the English with the German, for our most sensible men look at the German Muses through a film of prejudice and utter misconception.

With regard to philosophy, there are half a dozen things, good and bad, that in this country are so nick-named, but in the only accurate sense of the term, there neither are, have been, or ever will be but two essentially different schools of philosophy, the Platonic, and the Aristotelian. To the latter but with a somewhat nearer approach to the Platonic, Emanuel Kant belonged; to the former Bacon and Leibnitz, and, in his riper and better years, Berkeley. And to this I profess myself an adherent—*nihil novum, vel inauditum audemus;* though, as every man has a face of his own, without being more or less than a man, so is every true philosopher an original, without ceasing to be an inmate of Academus or of the Lyceum. But as to caution, I will just tell you how I proceeded myself twenty years and more ago, when I first felt a curiosity about Kant, and was fully aware that to master his meaning, as a system, would be a work of great labour and long time. First, I asked myself, have I the labour and the time in my power? Secondly, if so, and if it would be of adequate importance to me if true, by what means can I arrive at a rational presumption for or against? I inquired after all the more popular writings of Kant—read them with delight. I then read the Prefaces of several of his systematic works, as the *Prolegomena*, &c. Here too every part, I understood, and

[1] This letter and the following notes on Jean Paul were communicated by Mr. H. C. Robinson. S. C.

that was nearly the whole, was replete with sound and plain, though bold and to me novel truths; and I followed Socrates' adage respecting Heraclitus: all I understand is excellent, and I am bound to presume that the rest is at least worth the trouble of trying whether it be not equally so. In other words, until I understand a writer's ignorance, I presume myself ignorant of his understanding. Permit me to refer you to a chapter on this subject in my Literary Life.[1]

Yet I by no means recommend to you an extension of your philosophic researches beyond Kant. In him is contained all that can be *learned*, and as to the results, you have a firm faith in God, the responsible Will of Man and Immortality; and Kant will demonstrate to you, that this faith is acquiesced in, indeed, nay, confirmed by the Reason and Understanding, but grounded on Postulates authorized and substantiated solely by the *Moral* Being. There are likewise *mine*: and whether the Ideas are regulative only, as Aristotle and Kant teach, or constitutive and actual, as Pythagoras and Plato, is of living interest to the philosopher by profession alone. Both systems are equally true, if only the former abstain from denying *universally* what is denied individually. He, for whom Ideas are constitutive, will in effect be a Platonist; and in those for whom they are regulative only, Platonism is but a hollow affectation. Dryden could not have been a Platonist. Shakspeare, Milton, Dante, Michael Angelo and Rafael could not have been other than Platonists. Lord Bacon, who never read Plato's works, taught pure Platonism in his *great* work, the *Novum Organum*, and abuses his divine predecessor for fantastic nonsense, which he had been the first to explode. Accept my best respects, &c.

S. T. COLERIDGE.

14 Jan. 1814. Highgate.

[1] *Biographia Literaria*, vol. i. chap. xii. p. 242. S. C.

NOTES ON THE PALINGENESIEN OF JEAN PAUL.

Written in the blank leaf at the beginning.

——S ist zu merken, dass die Sprache in diesem Buch nicht sey wie in gewöhnlich Bette, darin der Gedankenstrom ordentlich and chrbar hinströmt, sondern wie cin Verwüstung in Damm and Deichen.[1]

Preface, p. xxxi.

Two Revolutions, the Gallican, which sacrifices the individuals to the Idea or to the State, and in time of need, even the latter themselves;—and the Kantian-Moralist (Kantisch-Moralische), which abandons the affection of human Love altogether, because it can so little be described as merit; these draw and station us forlorn human creatures ever further and more lonesomely one from another, each on a frosty uninhabited island: nay the Gallican which excites and arms feelings against feelings, does it less than the Critical, which teaches us to disarm and to dispense with them altogether; and which neither allows Love to pass for the spring of virtue, nor virtue for the source of Love.[2] *Transl.*

But surely Kant's aim was not to give a full *Sittenlehre*, or system of practical material morality, but the *a priori* form—*Ethice formalis*: which was then a most necessary work, and the only mode of quelling at once both Necessitarians and Meritmongers, and the idol common to both, Eudæmonism. If his followers have stood still in lazy adoration, instead of following up the road thus opened out to them, it is their fault not Kant's.

S. T. C.

[1] It is observable that the language in this book is not as in an ordinary channel, wherein the stream of thought flows on in a seemly and regular manner but like a violent flood rushing against dyke and mole.

[2] Zwei Revolutionen, diè gallische, welche der Idee oder dem Staate diè Individuen, and im Nothfal diesen selber opfert, und die kantisch-moralische, welch den Affekt der Menschenliebe liegen läss t, weil er so wenig wie Verdienste geb ten w den kan, diese ziehen und stellen u is verlas ene Menschen immer weiter un einsamer aus cinander, Jeden nur auf ein fro tiges unbewohntes Eiland; j die gallisch , die nur Gefühle gegen Gefühle bewafnet und aufhezt, thut es weniger als die kri i che, die sie entwafnen und entbehren lehrt, und die weder die Liebe als Quelle der Tugend noch diese als Quelle von jener gelten lassen kan.

L'ENVOY.

He was one who with long and large arm still collected precious armfuls in whatever direction he pressed forward, yet still took up so much more than he could keep together, that those who followed him gleaned more from his continual droppings than he himself brought home ;—nay, made stately corn-ricks therewith, while the reaper himself was still seen only with a strutting armful of newly-cut sheaves. But I should misinform you grossly if I left you to infer that his collections were a heap of incoherent *miscellanea*. No! the very contrary. Their variety, conjoined with the too great coherency, the too great both desire and power of referring them in systematic, nay, genetic subordination, was that which rendered his schemes gigantic and impracticable, as an author, and his conversation less instructive as a man. *Auditorem inopem ipsa copia fecit.*—Too much was given, all so weighty and brilliant as to preclude a chance of its being all received,—so that it not seldom passed over the hearer's mind like a roar of many waters.

LECTURES

ON

SHAKSPEARE AND MILTON.

THE FIRST LECTURE.

I CANNOT avoid the acknowledgment of the difficulty of the task I have undertaken; yet I have undertaken it voluntarily, and I shall discharge it to the best of my abilities, requesting those who hear me to allow for deficiencies, and to bear in mind the wide extent of my subject. The field is almost boundless as the sea, yet full of beauty and variety as the land: I feel in some sort oppressed by abundance; *inopem me copia fecit.*

What I most rely upon is your sympathy; and, as I proceed, I trust that I shall interest you: sympathy and interest are to a lecturer like the sun and the showers to nature—absolutely necessary to the production of blossoms and fruit.

May I venture to observe that my own life has been employed more in reading and conversation—in collecting and reflecting, than in printing and publishing; for I never felt the desire, so often experienced by others, of becoming an author. It was accident made me an author in the first instance: I was called a poet almost before I knew I could write poetry. In what I have to offer I shall speak freely, whether of myself or of my contemporaries, when it is necessary: conscious superiority, if indeed it be superior, need not fear to have its self-love or its pride wounded; and contempt, the most absurd and debasing feeling that can actuate the human mind, must be far below the sphere in which lofty intellects live and move and have their being.

On the first examination of a work, especially a work of fiction and fancy, it is right to inquire to what feeling or passion it addresses itself—to the benevolent, or to the vindictive? whether it is calculated to excite emulation, or to produce envy, under the common mask of scorn? and, in the next place, whether the pleasure we receive from it has a tendency to keep us good, to make us better, or to reward us for being good.

It will be expected of me, as my prospectus indicates, that I should say something of the causes of false criticism, particularly as regards poetry, though I do not mean to confine myself to that only: in doing so, it will be necessary for me to point out some of the obstacles which impede, and possibly prevent, the formation of a correct judgment. These are either—

1. Accidental causes, arising out of the particular circumstances of the age in which we live; or—

2. Permanent causes, flowing out of the general principles of our nature.

Under the first head, accidental causes, may be classed —1. The events that have occurred in our own day, which, from their importance alone, have created a world of readers. 2. The practice of public speaking, which encourages a too great desire to be understood at once, and at the first blush. 3. The prevalence of reviews, magazines, newspapers, novels, &c.

Of the last, and of the perusal of them, I will run the risk of asserting, that where the reading of novels prevails as a habit, it occasions in time the entire destruction of the powers of the mind: it is such an utter loss to the reader, that it is not so much to be called pass-time as kill-time. It conveys no trustworthy information as to facts; it produces no improvement of the intellect, but fills the mind with a mawkish and morbid sensibility, which is directly hostile to the cultivation, invigoration, and enlargement of the nobler faculties of the understanding.

Reviews are generally pernicious, because the writers determine without reference to fixed principles—because reviews are usually filled with personalities; and, above all, because they teach people rather to judge than to consider, to decide than to reflect: thus they encourage superficiality, and induce the thoughtless and the idle to adopt sentiments conveyed under the authoritative We, and not, by the working and subsequent clearing of their own minds, to form just original opinions. In older times writers were looked up to almost as intermediate beings, between angels and men; afterwards they were regarded as venerable and, perhaps, inspired teachers; subsequently they descended to the level of learned and instructive friends; but in modern days they are deemed culprits

more than benefactors: as culprits they are brought to the bar of self-erected and self-satisfied tribunals. If a person be now seen reading a new book, the most usual question is—"What trash have you there?" I admit that there is some reason for this difference in the estimate; for in these times, if a man fail as a tailor, or a shoemaker, and can read and write correctly (for spelling is still of some consequence) he becomes an author.[1]

The crying sin of modern criticism is that it is overloaded with personality. If an author commit an error, there is no wish to set him right for the sake of truth, but for the sake of triumph—that the reviewer may show how much wiser, or how much abler he is than the writer. Reviewers are usually people who would have been poets, historians, biographers, &c., if they could: they have tried their talents at one or at the other, and have failed; therefore they turn critics, and, like the Roman emperor, a critic most hates those who excel in the particular department in which he, the critic, has notoriously been defeated. This is an age of personality and political gossip, when insects, as in ancient Egypt, are worshipped in proportion to the venom of their stings—when poems, and especially satires, are valued according to the number of living names they contain; and where the notes, however, have this comparative excellence, that they are generally more poetical and pointed than the text. This style of criticism is at the present moment one of the chief pillars of the Scotch professorial court; and, as to personality in poems, I remember to have once seen an epic advertised, and strongly recommended, because it contained more than a hundred names of living characters.

How derogatory, how degrading, this is to true poetry I need not say. A very wise writer has maintained that there is more difference between one man and another, than between man and a beast: I can conceive of no lower state of human existence than that of a being who, insensible to the beauties of poetry himself, endeavours to reduce others to his own level. What Hooker so eloquently claims for law I say of poetry—"Her seat is the bosom of God, her voice the harmony of the world; all things

[1] Here my shorthand note informs me that Coleridge made a quotation from Jeremy Taylor, but from what work, or of what import, does not appear. He observed, that "although Jeremy Taylor wrote only in prose, according to some definitions of poetry he might be considered one of our noblest poets."—J. P. C.

in heaven and on earth do her homage." It is the language of heaven, and in the exquisite delight we derive from poetry we have, as it were, a type, a foretaste, and a prophecy of the joys of heaven.

Another cause of false criticism is the greater purity of morality in the present age, compared even with the last. Our notions upon this subject are sometimes carried to excess, particularly among those who in print affect to enforce the value of a high standard. Far be it from me to depreciate that value; but let me ask, who now will venture to read a number of the Spectator, or of the Tatler, to his wife and daughters, without first examining it to make sure that it contains no word which might, in our day, offend the delicacy of female ears, and shock feminine susceptibility? Even our theatres, the representations at which usually reflect the morals of the period, have taken a sort of domestic turn, and while the performances at them may be said, in some sense, to improve the heart, there is no doubt that they vitiate the taste. The effect is bad, however good the cause.

Attempts have been made to compose and adapt systems of education; but it appears to me something like putting Greek and Latin grammars into the hands of boys, before they understand a word of Greek or Latin. These grammars contain instructions on all the minutiæ and refinements of language, but of what use are they to persons who do not comprehend the first rudiments? Why are you to furnish the means of judging, before you give the capacity to judge? These seem to me to be among the principal accidental causes of false criticism.

Among the permanent causes, I may notice—

First, the great pleasure we feel in being told of the knowledge we possess, rather than of the ignorance we suffer. Let it be our first duty to teach thinking, and then what to think about. You cannot expect a person to be able to go through the arduous process of thinking, who has never exercised his faculties. In the Alps we see the chamois hunter ascend the most perilous precipices without danger, and leap from crag to crag over vast chasms without dread or difficulty, and who but a fool, if unpractised, would attempt to follow him? it is not intrepidity alone that is necessary, but he who would imitate the hunter must have gone through the same process for the acquisition of

strength, skill, and knowledge: he must exert, and be capable of exerting, the same muscular energies, and display the same perseverance and courage, or all his efforts will be worse than fruitless: they will lead not only to disappointment, but to destruction. Systems have been invented with the avowed object of teaching people how to think; but in my opinion the proper title for such a work ought to be "The Art of teaching how to think without thinking." Nobody endeavours to instruct a man how to leap, until he has first given him vigour and elasticity.

Nothing is more essential—nothing can be more important, than in every possible way to cultivate and improve the thinking powers: the mind as much requires exercise as the body, and no man can fully and adequately discharge the duties of whatever station he is placed in without the power of thought. I do not, of course, say that a man may not get through life without much thinking, or much power of thought; but if he be a carpenter, without thought a carpenter he must remain: if he be a weaver, without thought a weaver he must remain.—On man God has not only bestowed gifts, but the power of giving: he is not a creature born but to live and die: he has had faculties communicated to him, which, if he do his duty, he is bound to communicate and make beneficial to others. Man, in a secondary sense, may be looked upon in part as his own creator, for by the improvement of the faculties bestowed upon him by God, he not only enlarges them, but may be said to bring new ones into existence. The Almighty has thus condescended to communicate to man, in a high state of moral cultivation, a portion of his own great attributes.

A second permanent cause of false criticism is connected with the habit of not taking the trouble to think: it is the custom which some people have established of judging of books by books.—Hence to such the use and value of reviews. Why has nature given limbs, if they are not to be applied to motion and action; why abilities, if they are to lie asleep, while we avail ourselves of the eyes, ears, and understandings of others? As men often employ servants, to spare them the nuisance of rising from their seats and walking across a room, so men employ reviews in order to save themselves the trouble of exercising their own powers of judging: it is only mental slothfulness and sluggishness

that induce so many to adopt, and take for granted the opinions of others.

I may illustrate this moral imbecility by a case which came within my own knowledge. A friend of mine had seen it stated somewhere, or had heard it said, that Shakspeare had not made Constance, in "King John," speak the language of nature, when she exclaims on the loss of Arthur,

> "Grief fills the room up of my absent child;
> Lies in his bed, walks up and down with me;
> Puts on his pretty looks, repeats his words,
> Remembers me of all his gracious parts,
> Stuffs out his vacant garments with his form:
> Then have I reason to be fond of grief."
>
> *King John*, Act III., Scene 4.

Within three months after he had repeated the opinion (not thinking for himself) that these lines were out of nature, my friend died. I called upon his mother, an affectionate, but ignorant woman, who had scarcely heard the name of Shakspeare, much less read any of his plays. Like Philip, I endeavoured to console her, and among other things I told her, in the anguish of her sorrow, that she seemed to be as fond of grief as she had been of her son. What was her reply? Almost a prose parody on the very language of Shakspeare—the same thoughts in nearly the same words, but with a different arrangement. An attestation like this is worth a thousand criticisms.

As a third permanent cause of false criticism we may notice the vague use of terms. And here I may take the liberty of impressing upon my hearers, the fitness, if not the necessity, of employing the most appropriate words and expressions, even in common conversation, and in the ordinary transactions of life. If you want a substantive do not take the first that comes into your head, but that which most distinctly and peculiarly conveys your meaning: if an adjective, remember the grammatical use of that part of speech, and be careful that it expresses some quality in the substantive that you wish to impress upon your hearer. Reflect for a moment on the vague and uncertain manner in which the word "taste" has been often employed; and how such epithets as "sublime," "majestic," "grand," "striking," "picturesque," &c.,

have been misapplied, and how they have been used on the most unworthy and inappropriate occasions.

I was one day admiring one of the falls of the Clyde; and ruminating upon what descriptive term could be most fitly applied to it, I came to the conclusion that the epithet "majestic" was the most appropriate. While I was still contemplating the scene a gentleman and a lady came up, neither of whose faces bore much of the stamp of superior intelligence, and the first words the gentleman uttered were "It is very majestic." I was pleased to find such a confirmation of my opinion, and I complimented the spectator upon the choice of his epithet, saying that he had used the best word that could have been selected from our language: "Yes, sir," replied the gentleman, "I say it is very majestic: it is sublime, it is beautiful, it is grand, it is picturesque."—"Ay" (added the lady), "it is the prettiest thing I ever saw." I own that I was not a little disconcerted.

You will see, by the terms of my prospectus, that I intend my lectures to be, not only "in illustration of the principles of poetry," but to include a statement of the application of those principles, "as grounds of criticism on the most popular works of later English poets, those of the living included." If I had thought this task presumptuous on my part, I should not have voluntarily undertaken it; and in examining the merits, whether positive or comparative, of my contemporaries, I shall dismiss all feelings and associations which might lead me from the formation of a right estimate. I shall give talent and genius its due praise, and only bestow censure where, as it seems to me, truth and justice demand it. I shall, of course, carefully avoid falling into that system of false criticism, which I condemn in others; and, above all, whether I speak of those whom I know, or of those whom I do not know, of friends or of enemies, of the dead or of the living, my great aim will be to be strictly impartial. No man can truly apply principles, who displays the slightest bias in the application of them; and I shall have much greater pleasure in pointing out the good, than in exposing the bad. I fear no accusation of arrogance from the amiable and the wise: I shall pity the weak, and despise the malevolent.

END OF THE FIRST LECTURE.

THE SECOND LECTURE.

READERS may be divided into four classes:

1. Sponges, who absorb all they réad, and return it nearly in the same state, only a little dirtied.

2. Sand-glasses, who retain nothing, and are content to get through a book for the sake of getting through the time.

3. Strain-bags, who retain merely the dregs of what they read.

4. Mogul diamonds, equally rare and valuable, who profit by what they read, and enable others to profit by it also.[1]

I adverted in my last lecture to the prevailing laxity in the use of terms: this is the principal complaint to which the moderns are exposed; but it is a grievous one, inasmuch as it inevitably tends to the misapplication of words, and to the corruption of language. I mentioned the word "taste," but the remark applies not merely to substantives and adjectives, to things and their epithets, but to verbs: thus, how frequently is the verb "indorsed" strained from its true signification, as given by Milton in the expression—"And elephants indorsed with towers." Again "virtue" has been equally perverted: originally it signified merely strength; it then became strength of mind and valour, and it has now been changed to the class term for moral excellence[2] in all its various species. I only introduce these as instances by the way, and nothing could be easier than to multiply them.

[1] In "Notes and Queries," July 22, 1854, I quoted this four-fold division of readers; and in a friendly letter to me, the Rev. S. R Maitland pointed out the following passage in the Mishna (*Cap. Patrum*, v. § 15), which Coleridge clearly had in his mind, but to which my shorthand note does not state that he referred. It is very possible that I did not catch the reference; but more probable that he omitted it, thinking it not necessary, in an extemporaneous lecture, to quote chapter and verse for whatever he delivered. Had Coleridge previously written, or subsequently printed, his Lectures, he would, most likely, not have omitted the information:—

"Quadruplices conditiones (inveniunt) in his qui sedent coram sapientibus (audiendi causâ) videlicet conditio spongiæ, clepsydræ, sacci fecinacei, et cribri. Spongia sugendo attrahit omnia. Clepsydra, quod ex una parte attrahit, ex altera rursum effundit. Saccus fecinaceus effundit vinum, et colligit feces. Cribrum emittit farinam, et colligit similam."—J. P. C.

[2] My shorthand note of this part of the sentence strongly illustrates the point adverted to in the Preface, viz., how easy it is for a person, somewhat mechanically taking down words uttered *vivâ voce*, to mishear what is said. I am confident that Coleridge's words were "moral excellence"—there cannot be a doubt about it—but in my note it stands "*modern* excellence." My ear deceived me, and I thought he said *modern*, when in fact he said "moral."—J. P. C.

At the same time, while I recommend precision both of thought and expression, I am far from advocating a pedantic niceness in the choice of language: such a course would only render conversation stiff and stilted. Dr. Johnson used to say that in the most unrestrained discourse he always sought for the properest word,—that which best and most exactly conveyed his meaning: to a certain point he was right, but because he carried it too far, he was often laborious where he ought to have been light, and formal where he ought to have been familiar. Men ought to endeavour to distinguish subtilely, that they may be able afterwards to assimilate truly.

I have often heard the question put whether Pope is a great poet, and it has been warmly debated on both sides, some positively maintaining the affirmative, and others dogmatically insisting upon the negative; but it never occurred to either party to make the necessary preliminary inquiry —What is meant by the words "poet" and "poetry?" Poetry is not merely invention: if it were, Gulliver's Travels would be poetry; and before you can arrive at a decision of the question, as to Pope's claim, it is absolutely necessary to ascertain what people intend by the words they use. Harmonious versification no more makes poetry than mere invention makes a poet; and to both these requisites there is much besides to be added. In morals, politics, and philosophy no useful discussion can be entered upon, unless we begin by explaining and understanding the terms we employ. It is therefore requisite that I should state to you what I mean by the word "poetry," before I commence any consideration of the comparative merits of those who are popularly called "poets."

Words are used in two ways:—

1. In a sense that comprises everything called by that name. For instance, the words "poetry" and "sense" are employed in this manner, when we say that such a line is bad poetry or bad sense, when in truth it is neither poetry nor sense. If it be bad poetry, it is not poetry; if it be bad sense, it is not sense. The same of "metre": bad metre is not metre.

2. In a philosophic sense, which must include a definition of what is essential to the thing. Nobody means mere metre by poetry; so, mere rhyme is not poetry.

Something more is required, and what is that something? It is not wit, because we may have wit where we never dream of poetry. Is it the just observation of human life? Is it a peculiar and a felicitous selection of words? This, indeed, would come nearer to the taste of the present age, when sound is preferred to sense; but I am happy to think that this taste is not likely to last long.

The Greeks and Romans, in the best period of their literature, knew nothing of any such taste! High-flown epithets and violent metaphors, conveyed in inflated language, is not poetry. Simplicity is indispensable, and in Catullus it is often impossible that more simple language could be used; there is scarcely a word or a line, which a lamenting mother in a cottage might not have employed.[1] That I may be clearly understood, I will venture to give the following definition of poetry.

It is an art (or whatever better term our language may afford) of representing, in words, external nature and human thoughts and affections, both relatively to human affections, by the production of as much immediate pleasure in parts, as is compatible with the largest sum of pleasure in the whole.

Or, to vary the words, in order to make the abstract idea more intelligible:—

It is the art of communicating whatever we wish to communicate, so as both to express and produce excitement, but for the purpose of immediate pleasure; and each part is fitted to afford as much pleasure, as is compatible with the largest sum in the whole.

You will naturally ask my reasons for this definition of poetry, and they are these:—

"It is a representation of nature;" but that is not enough: the anatomist and the topographer give representations of nature; therefore I add:

"And of the human thoughts and affections" Here the metaphysician interferes: here our best novelists interfere likewise,—excepting that the latter describe with more minuteness, accuracy, and truth, than is consistent with poetry. Consequently I subjoin:

"It must be relative to the human affections." Here

[1] It appears by my shorthand note that Coleridge here named some particular poem by Catullus; but what it was is not stated, a blank having been left for the title. It would not be difficult to fill the chasm speculatively; but I prefer to give my memorandum as it stands.—J. P. C.

my chief point of difference is with the novel-writer, the historian, and all those who describe not only nature, and the human affections, but relatively to the human affections: therefore I must add:

"And it must be done for the purpose of immediate pleasure." In poetry the general good is to be accomplished through the pleasure, and if the poet do not do that, he ceases to be a poet to him to whom he gives it not. Still, it is not enough, because we may point out many prose writers to whom the whole of the definition hitherto furnished would apply. I add, therefore, that it is not only for the purpose of immediate pleasure, but—

"The work must be so constructed as to produce in each part that highest quantity of pleasure, or a high quantity of pleasure." There metre introduces its claim, where the feeling calls for it Our language gives to expression a certain measure, and will, in a strong state of passion, admit of scansion from the very mouth. The very assumption that we are reading the work of a poet supposes that he is in a continuous state of excitement; and thereby arises a language in prose unnatural, but in poetry natural.

There is one error which ought to be peculiarly guarded against, which young poets are apt to fall into, and which old poets commit, from being no poets, but desirous of the end which true poets seek to attain. No: I revoke the words; they are not desirous of that of which their little minds can have no just conception. They have no desire of fame—that glorious immortality of true greatness—

> "That lives and spreads aloft by those pure eyes,
> And perfect witness of all judging Jove;"
> MILTON'S *Lycidas*.

but they struggle for reputation, that echo of an echo, in whose very etymon its signification is contained. Into this error the author of "The Botanic Garden" has fallen, through the whole of which work, I will venture to assert, there are not twenty images described as a man would describe them in a state of excitement. The poem is written with all the tawdry industry of a milliner anxious to dress up a doll in silks and satins. Dr. Darwin laboured to make his style fine and gaudy, by accumulating and applying all the sonorous and handsome-looking words

in our language. This is not poetry, and I subjoin to my definition—

That a true poem must give "as much pleasure in each part as is compatible with the greatest sum of pleasure in the whole." We must not look to parts merely, but to the whole, and to the effect of that whole. In reading Milton, for instance, scarcely a line can be pointed out which, critically examined, could be called in itself good: the poet would not have attempted to produce, merely what is in general understood by a good line; he sought to produce glorious paragraphs and systems of harmony, or, as he himself expresses it,

> "Many a winding bout
> Of linked sweetness long drawn out."
> *L'Allegro.*

Such, therefore, as I have now defined it, I shall consider the sense of the word "Poetry": pleasurable excitement is its origin and object; pleasure is the magic circle out of which the poet must not dare to tread. Part of my definition, you will be aware, would apply equally to the arts of painting and music, as to poetry; but to the last are added words and metre, so that my definition is strictly and logically applicable to poetry, and to poetry only, which produces delight, the parent of so many virtues. When I was in Italy, a friend of mine, who pursued painting almost with the enthusiasm of madness, believing it superior to every other art, heard the definition I have given, acknowledged its correctness, and admitted the pre-eminence of poetry.

I never shall forget, when in Rome, the acute sensation of pain I experienced on beholding the frescoes of Raphael and Michael Angelo, and on reflecting that they were indebted for their preservation solely to the durable material upon which they were painted. There they are, the permanent monuments (permanent as long as walls and plaster last) of genius and skill, while many others of their mighty works have become the spoils of insatiate avarice, or the victims of wanton barbarism. How grateful ought mankind to be, that so many of the great literary productions of antiquity have come down to us—that the works of Homer, Euclid, and Plato, have been preserved—while we possess those of Bacon, Newton, Milton, Shakspeare,

and of so many other living-dead men of our own island. These, fortunately, may be considered indestructible: they shall remain to us till the end of time itself—till time, in the words of a great poet of the age of Shakspeare, has thrown his last dart at death, and shall himself submit to the final and inevitable destruction of all created matter.[1]

A second irruption of the Goths and Vandals could not now endanger their existence, secured as they are by the wonders of modern invention, and by the affectionate admiration of myriads of human beings. It is as nearly two centuries as possible since Shakspeare ceased to write, but when shall he cease to be read? When shall he cease to give light and delight? Yet even at this moment he is only receiving the first-fruits of that glory, which must continue to augment as long as our language is spoken. English has given immortality to him, and he has given immortality to English. Shakspeare can never die, and the language in which he wrote must with him live for ever.

Yet, in spite of all this, some prejudices have attached themselves to the name of our illustrious countryman, which it will be necessary for me first to endeavour to overcome. On the continent, we may remark, the works of Shakspeare are honoured in a double way—by the admiration of the Germans, and by the contempt of the French.

Among other points of objection taken by the French, perhaps, the most noticeable is, that he has not observed the sacred unities, so hallowed by the practice of their own extolled tragedians. They hold, of course after Corneille and Racine, that Sophocles is the most perfect model for tragedy, and Aristotle its most infallible censor; and that as Hamlet, Lear, Macbeth, and other dramas by Shakspeare are not framed upon that model, and consequently not subject to the same laws, they maintain (not having impartiality enough to question the model, or to deny the rules of the Stagirite) that Shakspeare was a sort of irregular genius—that he is now and then tasteful and touching, but generally incorrect; and, in short, that he

[1] Alluding, of course, to Ben Jonson's epitaph on the Countess of Pembroke:

"Underneath this sable herse
Lies the subject of all verse,
Sidney's sister, Pembroke's mother.
Death! ere thou hast slain another,
Learn'd, and fair, and good as she,
Time shall throw a dart at thee."

Ben Jonson's Works; edit. Gifford, viii 337.—J. P. C.

was a mere child of nature, who did not know any better than to write as he has written.

It is an old, and I have hitherto esteemed it a just, Latin maxim, *Oportet discentem credere, edoctum judicare;* but modern practice has inverted it, and it ought now rather to stand, *Oportet discentem judicare, edoctum credere.* To remedy this mistake there is but one course, namely the acquirement of knowledge. I have often run the risk of applying to the ignorant, who assumed the post and province of judges, a ludicrous, but not inapt simile: they remind me of a congregation of frogs, involved in darkness in a ditch, who keep an eternal croaking, until a lantern is brought near the scene of their disputation, when they instantly cease their discordant harangues. They may be more politely resembled to night-flies, which flutter round the glimmering of a feeble taper, but are overpowered by the dazzling splendour of noon-day. Nor can it be otherwise, until the prevalent notion is exploded, that knowledge is easily taught, and until the conviction is general, that the hardest thing learned is that people are ignorant. All are apt enough to discover and expose the ignorance of their friends, but their blind faith in their own sufficiency is something more than marvellous.

Some persons have contended that mathematics ought to be taught by making the illustrations obvious to the senses. Nothing can be more absurd or injurious: it ought to be our never-ceasing effort to make people think, not feel; and it is very much owing to this mistake that, to those who do not think, and have not been made to think, Shakspeare has been found so difficult of comprehension. The condition of the stage, and the character of the times in which our great poet flourished, must first of all be taken into account, in considering the question as to his judgment. If it were possible to say which of his great powers and qualifications is more admirable than the rest, it unquestionably appears to me that his judgment is the most wonderful; and at this conviction I have arrived after a careful comparison of his productions with those of his best and greatest contemporaries.

If indeed "King Lear" were to be tried by the laws which Aristotle established, and Sophocles obeyed, it must be at once admitted to be outrageously irregular; and supposing the rules regarding the unities to be founded on

man and nature, Shakspeare must be condemned for arraying his works in charms with which they ought never to have been decorated. I have no doubt, however, that both were right in their divergent courses, and that they arrived at the same conclusion by a different process.

Without entering into matters which must be generally known to persons of education, respecting the origin of tragedy and comedy among the Greeks, it may be observed, that the unities grew mainly out of the size and construction of the ancient theatres: the plays represented were made to include within a short space of time events which it is impossible should have occurred in that short space. This fact alone establishes, that all dramatic performances were then looked upon merely as ideal. It is the same with us: nobody supposes that a tragedian suffers real pain when he is stabbed or tortured; or that a comedian is in fact transported with delight when successful in pretended love.

If we want to witness mere pain, we can visit the hospitals: if we seek the exhibition of mere pleasure, we can find it in ball-rooms. It is the representation of it, not the reality, that we require, the imitation, and not the thing itself; and we pronounce it good or bad in proportion as the representation is an incorrect, or a correct imitation. The true pleasure we derive from theatrical performances arises from the fact that they are unreal and fictitious. If dying agonies were unfeigned, who, in these days of civilisation, could derive gratification from beholding them?

Performances in a large theatre made it necessary that the human voice should be unnaturally and unmusically stretched; and hence the introduction of recitative, for the purpose of rendering pleasantly artificial the distortion of the face, and straining of the voice, occasioned by the magnitude of the building. The fact that the ancient choruses were always on the stage made it impossible that any change of place should be represented, or even supposed.

The origin of the English stage is less boastful than that of the Greek stage: like the constitution under which we live, though more barbarous in its derivation, it gives more genuine and more diffused liberty, than Athens in the zenith of her political glory ever possessed. Our earliest

dramatic performances were religious, founded chiefly upon Scripture history; and, although countenanced by the clergy, they were filled with blasphemies and ribaldry, such as the most hardened and desperate of the present day would not dare to utter. In these representations vice and the principle of evil were personified; and hence the introduction of fools and clowns in dramas of a more advanced period.

While Shakspeare accommodated himself to the taste and spirit of the times in which he lived, his genius and his judgment taught him to use these characters with terrible effect, in aggravating the misery and agony of some of his most distressing scenes. This result is especially obvious in "King Lear": the contrast of the Fool wonderfully heightens the colouring of some of the most painful situations, where the old monarch in the depth and fury of his despair, complains to the warring elements of the ingratitude of his daughters.

> "———————— Spit, fire! spout, rain!
> Nor rain, wind, thunder, fire, are my daughters:
> I tax not you, you elements, with unkindness,
> I never gave you kingdom, call'd you children;
> You owe me no subscription: then, let fall
> Your horrible pleasure; here I stand, your slave,
> A poor, infirm, weak, and despis'd old man."
>
> *King Lear*, Act III., Scene 2.

Just afterwards, the Fool interposes, to heighten and inflame the passion of the scene.

In other dramas, though perhaps in a less degree, our great poet has evinced the same skill and felicity of treatment; and in no instance can it be justly alleged of him, as it may be of some of the ablest of his contemporaries, that he introduced his fool, or his clown, merely for the sake of exciting the laughter of his audiences. Shakspeare had a loftier and a better purpose, and in this respect availed himself of resources, which, it would almost seem, he alone possessed.[1]

[1] I most deeply regret, that I have not recovered any of my notes of the third, fourth, and fifth Lectures.—J. P. C.

END OF THE SECOND LECTURE.

THE SIXTH LECTURE.

THE recollection of what has been said by some of his biographers, on the supposed fact that Milton received corporal punishment at college, induces me to express my entire dissent from the notion, that flogging or caning has a tendency to degrade and debase the minds of boys at school. In my opinion it is an entire mistake; since this species of castigation has not only been inflicted time out of mind, but those who are subjected to it are well aware that the very highest persons in the realm, and those to whom people are accustomed to look up with most respect and reverence, such as the judges of the land, have quietly submitted to it in their pupilage.

I well remember, about twenty years ago, an advertisement from a schoolmaster, in which he assured tender-hearted and foolish parents, that corporal punishment was never inflicted, excepting in cases of absolute necessity; and that even then the rod was composed of lilies and roses, the latter, I conclude, stripped of their thorns. What, let me ask, has been the consequence, in many cases, of the abolition of flogging in schools? Reluctance to remove a pimple has not unfrequently transferred the disease to the vitals: sparing the rod, for the correction of minor faults, has ended in the commission of the highest crimes. A man of great reputation (I should rather say of great notoriety) sometimes punished the pupils under his care by suspending them from the ceiling in baskets, exposed to the derision of their school-fellows; at other times he pinned upon the clothes of the offender a number of last dying speeches and confessions, and employed another boy to walk before the culprit, making the usual monotonous lamentation and outcry.

On one occasion this absurd, and really degrading punishment was inflicted because a boy read with a tone, although, I may observe in passing, that reading with intonation is strictly natural, and therefore truly proper, excepting in the excess.[1]

[1] This was the Lecturer's own mode of reading verse, and even in prose there was an approach to intonation. I have heard him read Spenser with such an excess (to use his own word) in this respect, that it almost amounted to a song. In blank verse it was less, but still apparent. Milton's "Liberty of unlicensed Printing" was a favourite piece of rhetorical writing, and portions of it I have heard Coleridge recite, never without a sort of habitual rise and fall of the voice.—J. P. C.

Then, as to the character and effect of the punishment just noticed, what must a parent of well regulated and instructed mind think of the exhibition of his son in the manner I have described? Here, indeed, was debasement of the worst and lowest kind; for the feelings of a child were outraged, and made to associate and connect themselves with the sentence on an abandoned and shameless criminal. Who would not prefer the momentary, but useful, impression of flogging to this gross attack upon the moral feelings and self-respect of a boy? Again, as to the proper mode of reading: why is a tone in reading to be visited as a criminal offence, especially when the estimate of that offence arises out of the ignorance and incompetence of the master? Every man who reads with true sensibility, especially poetry, must read with a tone, since it conveys, with additional effect, the harmony and rhythm of the verse, without in the slightest degree obscuring the meaning. That is the highest point of excellence in reading which gives to every thing, whether of thought or language, its most just expression. There may be a wrong tone, as a right, and a wrong tone is of course to be avoided; but a poet writes in measure, and measure is best made apparent by reading with a tone, which heightens the verse, and does not in any respect lower the sense. I defy any man, who has a true relish of the beauty of versification, to read a canto of "the Fairy Queen," or a book of "Paradise Lost," without some species of intonation.

In various instances we are hardly sensible of its existence, but it does exist, and persons have not scrupled to say, and I believe it, that the tone of a good reader may be set to musical notation. If in these, and in other remarks that fall from me, I appear dogmatical, or dictatorial, it is to be borne in mind, that every man who takes upon himself to lecture, requires that he should be considered by his hearers capable of teaching something that is valuable, or of saying something that is worth hearing. In a mixed audience not a few are desirous of instruction, and some require it; but placed in my present situation I consider myself, not as a man who carries moveables into an empty house, but as a man who entering a generally well furnished dwelling, exhibits a light which enables the owner to see what is still wanting. I endeavour to introduce the means of ascertaining what is, and is not, in a man's own mind.

Not long since, when I lectured at the Royal Institution, I had the honour of sitting at the desk so ably occupied by Sir Humphry Davy, who may be said to have elevated the art of chemistry to the dignity of a science; who has discovered that one common law is applicable to the mind and to the body, and who has enabled us to give a full and perfect Amen to the great axiom of Lord Bacon, that knowledge is power. In the delivery of that course I carefully prepared my first essay, and received for it a cold suffrage of approbation: from accidental causes I was unable to study the exact form and language of my second lecture, and when it was at an end, I obtained universal and heart-felt applause. What a lesson was this to me not to elaborate my materials, nor to consider too nicely the expressions I should employ, but to trust mainly to the extemporaneous ebullition of my thoughts. In this conviction I have ventured to come before you here; and may I add a hope, that what I offer will be received in a similar spirit? It is true that my matter may not be so accurately arranged: it may not dovetail and fit at all times as nicely as could be wished; but you shall have my thoughts warm from my heart, and fresh from my understanding: you shall have the whole skeleton, although the bones may not be put together with the utmost anatomical skill.

The immense advantage possessed by men of genius over men of talents can be illustrated in no stronger manner, than by a comparison of the benefits resulting to mankind from the works of Homer and of Thucydides. The merits and claims of Thucydides, as a historian, are at once admitted; but what care we for the incidents of the Peloponnesian War? An individual may be ignorant of them, as far as regards the particular narrative of Thucydides; but woe to that statesman, or, I may say, woe to that man, who has not availed himself of the wisdom contained in "the tale of Troy divine!"

Lord Bacon has beautifully expressed this idea, where he talks of the instability and destruction of the monuments of the greatest heroes, and compares them with the everlasting writings of Homer, one word of which has never been lost since the days of Pisistratus. Like a mighty ship, they have passed over the sea of time, not leaving a mere ideal track, which soon altogether disappears, but leaving a train of glory in its wake, present and enduring, daily acting

upon our minds, and ennobling us by grand thoughts and images: to this work, perhaps, the bravest of our soldiery may trace and attribute some of their heroic achievements. Just as the body is to the immortal mind, so are the actions of our bodily powers in proportion to those by which, independent of individual continuity,[1] we are governed for ever and ever; by which we call, not only the narrow circle of mankind (narrow comparatively) as they now exist, our brethren, but by which we carry our being into future ages, and call all who shall succeed us our brethren, until at length we arrive at that exalted state, when we shall welcome into Heaven thousands and thousands, who will exclaim—"To you I owe the first development of my imagination; to you I owe the withdrawing of my mind from the low brutal part of my nature, to the lofty, the pure, and the perpetual."

Adverting to the subject more immediately before us, I may observe that I have looked at the reign of Elizabeth, interesting on many accounts, with peculiar pleasure and satisfaction, because it furnished circumstances so favourable to the existence, and to the full development of the powers of Shakespeare. The Reformation, just completed, had occasioned unusual activity of mind, a passion, as it were, for thinking, and for the discovery and use of words capable of expressing the objects of thought and invention. It was, consequently, the age of many conceits, and an age when, for a time, the intellect stood superior to the moral sense.

The difference between the state of mind in the reign of Elizabeth, and in that of Charles I. is astonishing. In the former period there was an amazing development of power, but all connected with prudential purposes—an attempt to reconcile the moral feeling with the full exercise of the powers of the mind, and the accomplishment of certain practical ends. Then lived Bacon, Burghley, Sir Walter Raleigh, Sir Philip Sidney, and a galaxy of great men, statesmen, lawyers, politicians, philosophers, and poets; and it is lamentable that they should have degraded

[1] I give this passage exactly as I find it in my notes; but it strikes me that something explanatory must have been accidentally omitted, and perhaps that the word I have written "continuity" ought to be *contiguity*. I might have left out the whole from "Just as the body" down to "the pure and the perpetual," but I preferred showing my own imperfectness to omitting what may be clear to others, though, at this distance of time, not so evident to me. The general point and bearing of what Coleridge said will be easily understood.—J. P. C.

their mighty powers to such base designs and purposes, dissolving the rich pearls of their great faculties in a worthless acid, to be drunken by a harlot. What was seeking the favour of the Queen, to a man like Bacon, but the mere courtship of harlotry ?

Compare this age with that of the republicans: that indeed was an awful age, as compared with our own. England may be said to have then overflowed from the fulness of grand principle—from the greatness which men felt in themselves, abstracted from the prudence with which they ought to have considered, whether their principles were, or were not, adapted to the condition of mankind at large. Compare the revolution then effected with that of a day not long past, when the bubbling-up and overflowing was occasioned by the elevation of the dregs—when there was a total absence of all principle, when the dregs had risen from the bottom to the top, and thus converted into scum, founded a monarchy to be the poisonous bane and misery of the rest of mankind.

It is absolutely necessary to recollect, that the age in which Shakspeare lived was one of great abilities applied to individual and prudential purposes, and not an age of high moral feeling and lofty principle, which gives a man of genius the power of thinking of all things in reference to all. If, then, we should find that Shakspeare took these materials as they were presented to him, and yet to all effectual purposes produced the same grand result as others attempted to produce in an age so much more favourable, shall we not feel and acknowledge the purity and holiness of genius—a light, which, however it might shine on a dunghill, was as pure as the divine effluence which created all the beauty of nature ?

One of the consequences of the idea prevalent at the period when Shakspeare flourished, viz., that persons must be men of talents in proportion as they were gentlemen, renders certain characters in his dramas natural with reference to the date when they were drawn: when we read them we are aware that they are not of our age, and in one sense they may be said to be of no age. A friend of mine well remarked of Spenser, that he is out of space: the reader never knows where he is, but still he knows, from the consciousness within him, that all is as natural and proper, as if the country where the action is laid were

distinctly pointed out, and marked down in a map. Shakspeare is as much out of time, as Spenser is out of space; yet we feel conscious, though we never knew that such characters existed, that they might exist, and are satisfied with the belief in their existence.

This circumstance enabled Shakspeare to paint truly, and according to the colouring of nature, a vast number of personages by the simple force of meditation: he had only to imitate certain parts of his own character, or to exaggerate such as existed in possibility, and they were at once true to nature, and fragments of the divine mind that drew them. Men who see the great luminary of our system through various optical instruments declare that it seems either square, triangular, or round, when in truth it is still the sun, unchanged in shape and proportion. So with the characters of our great poet: some may think them of one form, and some of another; but they are still nature, still Shakspeare, and the creatures of his meditation.

When I use the term meditation, I do not mean that our great dramatist was without observation of external circumstances: quite the reverse; but mere observation may be able to produce an accurate copy, and even to furnish to other men's minds more than the copyist professed; but what is produced can only consist of parts and fragments, according to the means and extent of observation. Meditation looks at every character with interest, only as it contains something generally true, and such as might be expressed in a philosophical problem.

Shakspeare's characters may be reduced to a few—that is to say, to a few classes of characters. If you take his gentlemen, for instance, Biron is seen again in Mercutio, in Benedick, and in several others. They are men who combine the politeness of the courtier with the faculties of high intellect—those powers of combination and severance which only belong to an intellectual mind. The wonder is how Shakspeare can thus disguise himself, and possess such miraculous powers of conveying what he means without betraying the poet, and without even producing the consciousness of him.

In the address of Mercutio regarding Queen Mab, which is so well known that it is unnecessary to repeat it, is to be noted all the fancy of the poet; and the language in which it is conveyed possesses such facility and felicity, that one

would almost say that it was impossible for it to be thought, unless it were thought as naturally, and without effort, as Mercutio repeats it. This is the great art by which Shakspeare combines the poet and the gentleman throughout, borrowing from his most amiable nature that which alone could combine them, a perfect simplicity of mind, a delight in all that is excellent for its own sake, without reference to himself as causing it, and by that which distinguishes him from all other poets, alluded to by one of his admirers in a short poem, where he tells us that while Shakspeare possessed all the powers of a man, and more than a man, yet he had all the feelings, the sensibility, the purity, innocence, and delicacy of an affectionate girl of eighteen.

Before I enter upon the merits of the tragedy of "Romeo and Juliet," it will be necessary for me to say something of the language of our country. And here I beg leave to observe, that although I have announced these as lectures upon Milton and Shakspeare, they are in reality, as also stated in the prospectus, intended to illustrate the principles of poetry: therefore, all must not be regarded as mere digression which does not immediately and exclusively refer to those writers. I have chosen them, in order to bring under the notice of my hearers great general truths; in fact, whatever may aid myself, as well as others, in deciding upon the claims of all writers of all countries.

The language, that is to say the particular tongue, in which Shakspeare wrote, cannot be left out of consideration. It will not be disputed, that one language may possess advantages which another does not enjoy; and we may state with confidence, that English excels all other languages in the number of its practical words. The French may bear the palm in the names of trades, and in military and diplomatic terms. Of the German it may be said, that, exclusive of many mineralogical words, it is incomparable in its metaphysical and psychological force: in another respect it nearly rivals the Greek,

> "The learned Greek, rich in fit epithets,
> Blest in the lovely marriage of pure words;"[1]

I mean in its capability of composition—of forming com-

[1] From Act I., Scene 1, of "Lingua, or the Combat of the Tongue and the Five Senses." This drama is reprinted in Dodsley's Old Plays, vol. v. (last edition), and the lines may be found on p. 107 of that volume.

pound words. Italian is the sweetest and softest language; Spanish the most majestic. All these have their peculiar faults; but I never can agree that any language is unfit for poetry, although different languages, from the condition and circumstances of the people, may certainly be adapted to one species of poetry more than to another.

Take the French as an example. It is, perhaps, the most perspicuous and pointed language in the world, and therefore best fitted for conversation, for the expression of light and airy passion, attaining its object by peculiar and felicitous turns of phrase, which are evanescent, and, like the beautifully coloured dust on the wings of a butterfly, must not be judged by the test of touch. It appears as if it were all surface and had no substratum, and it constantly most dangerously tampers with morals, without positively offending decency. As the language for what is called modern genteel comedy all others must yield to French.

Italian can only be deemed second to Spanish, and Spanish to Greek, which contains all the excellences of all languages. Italian, though sweet and soft, is not deficient in force and dignity; and I may appeal to Ariosto, as a poet who displays to the utmost advantage the use of his native tongue for all purposes, whether of passion, sentiment, humour, or description.

But in English I find that which is possessed by no other modern language, and which, as it were, appropriates it to the drama. It is a language made out of many, and it has consequently many words, which originally had the same meaning; but in the progress of society those words have gradually assumed different shades of meaning. Take any homogeneous language, such as German, and try to translate into it the following lines:—

> "But not to one, in this benighted age,
> Is that diviner inspiration given,
> That burns in Shakspeare's or in Milton's page,
> The pomp and prodigality of heaven."
>
> GRAY'S *Stanzas to Bentley.*

In German it would be necessary to say "the pomp" and *spendthriftness* of heaven," because the German has not, as we have, one word with two such distinct meanings, one expressing the nobler, the other the baser idea of the same action.

The monosyllabic character of English enables us,

besides, to express more meaning in a shorter compass than can be done in any other language. In truth, English may be called the harvest of the unconscious wisdom of various nations, and was not the formation of any particular time, or assemblage of individuals. Hence the number of its passionate phrases—its metaphorical terms, not borrowed from poets, but adopted by them. Our commonest people, when excited by passion, constantly employ them: if a mother lose her child she is full of the wildest fancies, and the words she uses assume a tone of dignity; for the constant hearing and reading of the Bible and Liturgy clothes her thoughts not only in the most natural, but in the most beautiful forms of language.

I have been induced to offer these remarks, in order to obviate an objection often made against Shakspeare on the ground of the multitude of his conceits. I do not pretend to justify every conceit, and a vast number have been most unfairly imputed to him; for I am satisfied that many portions of scenes attributed to Shakspeare were never written by him. I admit, however, that even in those which bear the strongest characteristics of his mind, there are some conceits not strictly to be vindicated. The notion against which I declare war is, that whenever a conceit is met with it is unnatural. People who entertain this opinion forget, that had they lived in the age of Shakspeare, they would have deemed them natural. Dryden in his translation of Juvenal has used the words "Look round the world," which are a literal version of the original; but Dr. Johnson has swelled and expanded this expression into the following couplet:—

> "Let observation, with extensive view,
> Survey mankind from China to Peru;"
> *Vanity of Human Wishes.*

mere bombast and tautology; as much as to say, "Let observation with extensive observation observe mankind extensively."

Had Dr. Johnson lived in the time of Shakspeare, or even of Dryden, he would never have been guilty of such an outrage upon common sense and common language; and if people would, in idea, throw themselves back a couple of centuries, they would find that conceits, and even puns, were very allowable, because very natural. Puns

often arise out of a mingled sense of injury, and contempt of the person inflicting it, and, as it seems to me, it is a natural way of expressing that mixed feeling. I could point out puns in Shakspeare, where they appear almost as if the first openings of the mouth of nature—where nothing else could so properly be said. This is not peculiar to puns, but is of much wider application: read any part of the works of our great dramatist, and the conviction comes upon you irresistibly, not only that what he puts into the mouths of his personages might have been said, but that it must have been said, because nothing so proper could have been said.

In a future lecture I will enter somewhat into the history of conceits, and shew the wise use that has heretofore been made of them. I will now (and I hope it will be received with favour) attempt a defence of conceits and puns, taking my examples mainly from the poet under consideration. I admit, of course, that they may be misapplied; but throughout life, I may say, I never have discovered the wrong use of a thing, without having previously discovered the right use of it. To the young I would remark, that it is always unwise to judge of anything by its defects: the first attempt ought to be to discover its excellences. If a man come into my company and abuse a book, his invectives coming down like water from a shower bath, I never feel obliged to him: he probably tells me no news, for all works, even the best have defects, and they are easily seen; but if a man show me beauties, I thank him for his information, because, in my time, I have unfortunately gone through so many volumes that have had little or nothing to recommend them. Always begin with the good—*à Jove principium*—and the bad will make itself evident enough, quite as soon as is desirable.

I will proceed to speak of Shakspeare's wit, in connexion with his much abused puns and conceits; because an excellent writer, who has done good service to the public taste by driving out the nonsense of the Italian school, has expressed his surprise, that all the other excellences of Shakspeare were, in a greater or less degree, possessed by his contemporaries: thus, Ben Jonson had one qualification, Massinger another, while he declares that Beaumont and Fletcher had equal knowledge of human nature, with more variety. The point in which none of them had

approached Shakspeare, according to this writer, was his wit. I own, I was somewhat shocked to see it gravely said in print, that the quality by which Shakspeare was to be individualised from all others was, what is ordinarily called, wit. I had read his plays over and over, and it did not strike me that wit was his great and characteristic superiority. In reading Voltaire, or (to take a standard and most witty comedy as an example) in reading "The School for Scandal," I never experienced the same sort of feeling as in reading Shakspeare.

That Shakspeare has wit is indisputable, but it is not the same kind of wit as in other writers: his wit is blended with the other qualities of his works, and is, by its nature, capable of being so blended. It appears in all parts of his productions, in his tragedies, comedies, and histories: it is not like the wit of Voltaire, and of many modern writers, to whom the epithet "witty" has been properly applied, whose wit consists in a mere combination of words; but in at least nine times out of ten in Shakspeare, the wit is produced not by a combination of words, but by a combination of images.

It is not always easy to distinguish between wit and fancy. When the whole pleasure received is derived from surprise at an unexpected turn of expression, then I call it wit; but when the pleasure is produced not only by surprise, but also by an image which remains with us and gratifies for its own sake, then I call it fancy. I know of no mode so satisfactory of distinguishing between wit and fancy. I appeal to the recollection of those who hear me, whether the greater part of what passes for wit in Shakspeare, is not most exquisite humour, heightened by a figure, and attributed to a particular character? Take the instance of the flea on Bardolph's nose, which Falstaff compares to a soul suffering in purgatory. The images themselves, in cases like this, afford a great part of the pleasure.

These remarks are not without importance in forming a judgment of poets and writers in general: there is a wide difference between the talent which gives a sort of electric surprise by a mere turn of phrase, and that higher ability which produces surprise by a permanent medium, and always leaves something behind it, which satisfies the mind as well as tickles the hearing. The first belongs to

men of cleverness, who, having been long in the world, have observed the turns of phrase which please in company, and which, passing away the moment, are passed in a moment, being no longer recollected than the time they take in utterance. We must all have seen and known such people; and I remember saying of one of them that he was like a man who squandered his estate in farthings: he gave away so many, that he must needs have been wealthy. This sort of talent by no means constitutes genius, although it has some affinity to it.

The wit of Shakspeare is, as it were, like the flourishing of a man's stick, when he is walking, in the full flow of animal spirits: it is a sort of exuberance of hilarity which disburdens, and it resembles a conductor, to distribute a portion of our gladness to the surrounding air. While, however, it disburdens, it leaves behind what is weightiest and most important, and what most contributes to some direct aim and purpose.

I will now touch upon a very serious charge against Shakspeare—that of indecency and immorality. Many have been those who have endeavoured to exculpate him by saying, that it was the vice of his age; but he was too great to require exculpation from the accidents of any age. These persons have appealed to Beaumont and Fletcher, to Massinger, and to other less eminent dramatists, to prove that what is complained of was common to them all. Oh! shame and sorrow, if it were so: there is nothing common to Shakspeare and to other writers of his day—not even the language they employed.

In order to form a proper judgment upon this point, it is necessary to make a distinction between manners and morals; and that distinction being once established, and clearly comprehended, Shakspeare will appear as pure a writer, in reference to all that we ought to be, and to all that we ought to feel, as he is wonderful in reference to his intellectual faculties.

By manners I mean what is dependent on the particular customs and fashions of the age. Even in a state of comparative barbarism as to manners, there may be, and there is, morality. But give me leave to say that we have seen much worse times than those—times when the mind was so enervated and degraded, that the most distant associations, that could possibly connect our ideas

with the basest feelings, immediately brought forward those base feelings, without reference to the nobler impulses; thus destroying the little remnant of humanity, excluding from the mind what is good, and introducing what is bad to keep the bestial nature company.

On looking through Shakspeare, offences against decency and manners may certainly be pointed out; but let us examine history minutely, and we shall find that this was the ordinary language of the time, and then let us ask, where is the offence? The offence, so to call it, was not committed wantonly, and for the sake of offending, but for the sake of merriment; for what is most observable in Shakspeare, in reference to this topic, is that what he says is always calculated to raise a gust of laughter, that would, as it were, blow away all impure ideas, if it did not excite abhorrence of them.

Above all, let us compare him with some modern writers, the servile imitators of the French, and we shall receive a most instructive lesson. I may take the liberty of reading the following note, written by me after witnessing the performance of a modern play at Malta, about nine years ago:—"I went to the theatre, and came away without waiting for the entertainment. The longer I live, the more I am impressed with the exceeding immorality of modern plays: I can scarcely refrain from anger and laughter at the shamelessness, and the absurdity of the presumption which presents itself, when I think of their pretences to superior morality, compared with the plays of Shakspeare."

Here let me pause for one moment; for while reading my note I call to mind a novel, on the sofa or toilet of nearly every woman of quality, in which the author gravely warns parents against the indiscreet communication to their children of the contents of some parts of the Bible, as calculated to injure their morals. Another modern author, who has done his utmost to undermine the innocence of the young of both sexes, has the effrontery to protest against the exhibition of the bare leg of a Corinthian female. My note thus pursues the subject:—"In Shakspeare there are a few gross speeches, but it is doubtful to me if they would produce any ill effect on an unsullied mind; while in some modern plays, as well as in some modern novels, there is a systematic undermining

of all morality: they are written in the true cant of humanity, that has no object but to impose; where virtue is not placed in action, or in the habits that lead to action, but, like the title of a book I have heard of, they are 'a hot huddle of indefinite sensations.' In these the lowest incitements to piety are obtruded upon us; like an impudent rascal at a masquerade, who is well known in spite of his vizor, or known by it, and yet is allowed to be impudent in virtue of his disguise. In short, I appeal to the whole of Shakspeare's writings, whether his grossness is not the mere sport of fancy, dissipating low feelings by exciting the intellect, and only injuring while it offends? Modern dramas injure in consequence of not offending. Shakspeare's worst passages are grossnesses against the degradations of our nature: those of our modern plays are too often delicacies directly in favour of them."

Such was my note, made nine years ago, and I have since seen every reason to adhere firmly to the opinions it expresses.

In my next lecture I will proceed to an examination of "Romeo and Juliet;" and I take that tragedy, because in it are to be found all the crude materials of future excellence. The poet, the great dramatic poet, is throughout seen, but the various parts of the composition are not blended with such harmony as in some of his after writings. I am directed to it, more than all, for this reason,—because it affords me the best opportunity of introducing Shakspeare as a delineator of female character, and of love in all its forms, and with all the emotions which deserve that sweet and man-elevating name.

It has been remarked, I believe by Dryden, that Shakspeare wrote for men only, but Beaumont and Fletcher (or rather "the gentle Fletcher") for women. I wish to begin by shewing, not only that this is not true, but that, of all writers for the stage, he only has drawn the female character with that mixture of the real and of the ideal which belongs to it; and that there is no one female personage in the plays of all his contemporaries, of whom a man, seriously examining his heart and his good sense, can say "Let that woman be my companion through life: let her be the subject of my suit, and the reward of my success."

END OF THE SIXTH LECTURE.

THE SEVENTH LECTURE.

In a former lecture I endeavoured to point out the union of the Poet and the Philosopher, or rather the warm embrace between them, in the "Venus and Adonis" and "Lucrece" of Shakspeare. From thence I passed on to "Love's Labour's Lost," as the link between his character as a Poet, and his art as a Dramatist; and I shewed that, although in that work the former was still predominant, yet that the germs of his subsequent dramatic power were easily discernible.

I will now, as I promised in my last, proceed to "Romeo and Juliet," not because it is the earliest, or among the earliest of Shakspeare's works of that kind, but because in it are to be found specimens, in degree, of all the excellences which he afterwards displayed in his more perfect dramas, but differing from them in being less forcibly evidenced, and less happily combined: all the parts are more or less present, but they are not united with the same harmony.

There are, however, in "Romeo and Juliet" passages where the poet's whole excellence is evinced, so that nothing superior to them can be met with in the productions of his after years. The main distinction between this play and others is, as I said, that the parts are less happily combined, or to borrow a phrase from the painter, the whole work is less in keeping. Grand portions are produced: we have limbs of giant growth; but the production, as a whole, in which each part gives delight for itself, and the whole, consisting of these delightful parts, communicates the highest intellectual pleasure and satisfaction, is the result of the application of judgment and taste. These are not to be attained but by painful study, and to the sacrifice of the stronger pleasures derived from the dazzling light which a man of genius throws over every circumstance, and where we are chiefly struck by vivid and distinct images. Taste is an attainment after a poet has been disciplined by experience, and has added to genius that talent by which he knows what part of his genius he can make acceptable, and intelligible to the portion of mankind for which he writes.

In my mind it would be a hopeless symptom, as regards

genius, if I found a young man with anything like perfect taste. In the earlier works of Shakspeare we have a profusion of double epithets, and sometimes even the coarsest terms are employed, if they convey a more vivid image; but by degrees the associations are connected with the image they are designed to impress, and the poet descends from the ideal into the real world so far as to conjoin both—to give a sphere of active operations to the ideal, and to elevate and refine the real.

In "Romeo and Juliet" the principal characters may be divided into two classes: in one class passion—the passion of love—is drawn and drawn truly, as well as beautifully; but the persons are not individualised farther than as the actor appears on the stage. It is a very just description and development of love, without giving, if I may so express myself, the philosophical history of it—without shewing how the man became acted upon by that particular passion, but leading it through all the incidents of the drama, and rendering it predominant.

Tybalt is, in himself, a commonplace personage. And here allow me to remark upon a great distinction between Shakspeare, and all who have written in imitation of him. I know no character in his plays (unless indeed Pistol be an exception) which can be called the mere portrait of an individual: while the reader feels all the satisfaction arising from individuality, yet that very individual is a sort of class character, and this circumstance renders Shakspeare the poet of all ages.

Tybalt is a man abandoned to his passions—with all the pride of family, only because he thought it belonged to him as a member of that family, and valuing himself highly, simply because he does not care for death. This indifference to death is perhaps more common than any other feeling: men are apt to flatter themselves extravagantly, merely because they possess a quality which it is a disgrace not to have, but which a wise man never puts forward, but when it is necessary.

Jeremy Taylor in one part of his voluminous works, speaking of a great man, says that he was naturally a coward, as indeed most men are, knowing the value of life; but the power of his reason enabled him, when required, to conduct himself with uniform courage and hardihood. The good bishop, perhaps, had in his mind a story, told by

one of the ancients, of a Philosopher and a Coxcomb, on board the same ship during a storm: the Coxcomb reviled the Philosopher for betraying marks of fear: "Why are you so frightened? I am not afraid of being drowned: I do not care a farthing for my life."—"You are perfectly right," said the Philosopher, "for your life is not worth a farthing."

Shakspeare never takes pains to make his characters win your esteem, but leaves it to the general command of the passions, and to poetic justice. It is most beautiful to observe, in "Romeo and Juliet," that the characters principally engaged in the incidents are preserved innocent from all that could lower them in our opinion, while the rest of the personages, deserving little interest in themselves, derive it from being instrumental in those situations in which the more important personages develope their thoughts and passions.

Look at Capulet—a worthy, noble-minded old man of high rank, with all the impatience that is likely to accompany it. It is delightful to see all the sensibilities of our nature so exquisitely called forth; as if the poet had the hundred arms of the polypus, and had thrown them out in all directions to catch the predominant feeling. We may see in Capulet the manner in which anger seizes hold of everything that comes in its way, in order to express itself, as in the lines where he reproves Tybalt for his fierceness of behaviour, which led him to wish to insult a Montague, and disturb the merriment.—

> "Go to, go to;
> You are a saucy boy. Is't so, indeed?
> This trick may chance to scath you;—I know what.
> You must contrary me! marry, 'tis time.—
> Well said, my hearts!—You are a princox: go:
> Be quiet or—More light, more light!—For shame!
> I'll make you quiet.—What! cheerly, my hearts!"
>
> *Act I., Scene* 5.

The line

> "This trick may chance to scath you;—I know what,"

was an allusion to the legacy Tybalt might expect; and then, seeing the lights burn dimly, Capulet turns his anger against the servants. Thus we see that no one passion is so predominant, but that it includes all the parts of the character, and the reader never has a mere abstract of a

passion, as of wrath or ambition, but the whole man is presented to him—the one predominant passion acting, if I may so say, as the leader of the band to the rest.

It could not be expected that the poet should introduce such a character as Hamlet into every play; but even in those personages, which are subordinate to a hero so eminently philosophical, the passion is at least rendered instructive, and induces the reader to look with a keener eye, and a finer judgment into human nature.

Shakspeare has this advantage over all other dramatists —that he has availed himself of his psychological genius to develope all the minutiæ of the human heart: shewing us the thing that, to common observers, he seems solely intent upon, he makes visible what we should not otherwise have seen: just as, after looking at distant objects through a telescope, when we behold them subsequently with the naked eye, we see them with greater distinctness, and in more detail, than we should otherwise have done.

Mercutio is one of our poet's truly Shakspearean characters; for throughout his plays, but especially in those of the highest order, it is plain that the personages were drawn rather from meditation than from observation, or to speak correctly, more from observation, the child of meditation. It is comparatively easy for a man to go about the world, as if with a pocket-book in his hand, carefully noting down what he sees and hears: by practice he acquires considerable facility in representing what he has observed, himself frequently unconscious of its worth, or its bearings. This is entirely different from the observation of a mind, which, having formed a theory and a system upon its own nature, remarks all things that are examples of its truth, confirming it in that truth, and, above all, enabling it to convey the truths of philosophy, as mere effects derived from, what we may call, the outward watchings of life.

Hence it is that Shakspeare's favourite characters are full of such lively intellect. Mercutio is a man possessing all the elements of a poet: the whole world was, as it were, subject to his law of association. Whenever he wishes to impress anything, all things become his servants for the purpose: all things tell the same tale, and sound in unison. This faculty, moreover, is combined with the manners and feelings of a perfect gentleman, himself utterly un-

conscious of his powers. By his loss it was contrived that the whole catastrophe of the tragedy should be brought about: it endears him to Romeo, and gives to the death of Mercutio an importance which it could not otherwise have acquired.

I say this in answer to an observation, I think by Dryden (to which indeed Dr. Johnson has fully replied), that Shakspeare having carried the part of Mercutio as far as he could, till his genius was exhausted, had killed him in the third Act, to get him out of the way. What shallow nonsense! As I have remarked, upon the death of Mercutio the whole catastrophe depends; it is produced by it. The scene in which it occurs serves to show how indifference to any subject but one, and aversion to activity on the part of Romeo, may be overcome and roused to the most resolute and determined conduct. Had not Mercutio been rendered so amiable and so interesting, we could not have felt so strongly the necessity for Romeo's interference, connecting it immediately, and passionately, with the future fortunes of the lover and his mistress.

But what am I to say of the Nurse? We have been told that her character is the mere fruit of observation—that it is like Swift's "Polite Conversation," certainly the most stupendous work of human memory, and of unceasingly active attention to what passes around us, upon record. The Nurse in "Romeo and Juliet" has sometimes been compared to a portrait by Gerard Dow, in which every hair was so exquisitely painted, that it would bear the test of the microscope. Now, I appeal confidently to my hearers whether the closest observation of the manners of one or two old nurses would have enabled Shakspeare to draw this character of admirable generalisation? Surely not. Let any man conjure up in his mind all the qualities and peculiarities that can possibly belong to a nurse, and he will find them in Shakspeare's picture of the old woman: nothing is omitted. This effect is not produced by mere observation. The great prerogative of genius (and Shakspeare felt and availed himself of it) is now to swell itself to the dignity of a god, and now to subdue and keep dormant some part of that lofty nature, and to descend even to the lowest character—to become everything, in fact, but the vicious.

Thus, in the Nurse you have all the garrulity of old-

age, and all its fondness; for the affection of old-age is one of the greatest consolations of humanity. I have often thought what a melancholy world this would be without children, and what an inhuman world without the aged.

You have also in the Nurse the arrogance of ignorance, with the pride of meanness at being connected with a great family. You have the grossness, too, which that situation never removes, though it sometimes suspends it; and, arising from that grossness, the little low vices attendant upon it, which, indeed, in such minds are scarcely vices.—Romeo at one time was the most delightful and excellent young man, and the Nurse all willingness to assist him; but her disposition soon turns in favour of Paris, for whom she professes precisely the same admiration. How wonderfully are these low peculiarities contrasted with a young and pure mind, educated under different circumstances!

Another point ought to be mentioned as characteristic of the ignorance of the Nurse:—it is, that in all her recollections, she assists herself by the remembrance of visual circumstances. The great difference, in this respect, between the cultivated and the uncultivated mind is this—that the cultivated mind will be found to recal the past by certain regular trains of cause and effect; whereas, with the uncultivated mind, the past is recalled wholly by coincident images, or facts which happened at the same time. This position is fully exemplified in the following passages put into the mouth of the Nurse:—

> "Even or odd, of all days in the year,
> Come Lammas eve at night shall she be fourteen.
> Susan and she—God rest all Christian souls!—
> Were of an age.—Well, Susan is with God;
> She was too good for me. But, as I said,
> On Lammas eve at night shall she be fourteen;
> That shall she, marry: I remember it well.
> 'Tis since the earthquake now eleven years;
> And she was wean'd,—I never shall forget it,—
> Of all the days of the year, upon that day,
> For I had then laid wormwood to my dug,
> Sitting in the sun under the dove-house wall:
> My lord and you were then at Mantua.—
> Nay, I do bear a brain:—but, as I said,
> When it did taste the wormwood on the nipple
> Of my dug, and felt it bitter, pretty fool,
> To see it tetchy, and fall out with the dug!
> Shake, quoth the dove-house: 'twas no need, I trow,

To bid me trudge.
And since that time it is eleven years;
For then she could stand alone."

Act I., Scene 3.

She afterwards goes on with similar visual impressions, so true to the character.—More is here brought into one portrait than could have been ascertained by one man's mere observation, and without the introduction of a single incongruous point.

I honour, I love, the works of Fielding as much, or perhaps more, than those of any other writer of fiction of that kind: take Fielding in his characters of postillions, landlords, and landladies, waiters, or indeed, of anybody who had come before his eye, and nothing can be more true, more happy, or more humorous; but in all his chief personages, Tom Jones for instance, where Fielding was not directed by observation, where he could not assist himself by the close copying of what he saw, where it is necessary that something should take place, some words be spoken, or some object described, which he could not have witnessed (his soliloquies for example, or the interview between the hero and Sophia Western before the reconciliation) and I will venture to say, loving and honouring the man and his productions as I do, that nothing can be more forced and unnatural: the language is without vivacity or spirit, the whole matter is incongruous, and totally destitute of psychological truth.

On the other hand, look at Shakspeare: where can any character be produced that does not speak the language of nature? where does he not put into the mouths of his *dramatis personæ*, be they high or low, Kings or Constables, precisely what they must have said? Where, from observation, could he learn the language proper to Sovereigns, Queens, Noblemen or Generals? yet he invariably uses it.—Where, from observation, could he have learned such lines as these, which are put into the mouth of Othello, when he is talking to Iago of Brabantio?

"Let him do his spite:
My services, which I have done the signiory,
Shall out-tongue his complaints. 'Tis yet to know,
Which, when I know that boasting is an honour,
I shall promulgate, I fetch my life and being
From men of royal siege; and my demerits
May speak, unbonneted, to as proud a fortune

> As this that I have reach'd: for know, Iago,
> But that I love the gentle Desdemona,
> I would not my unhoused free condition
> Put into circumscription and confine
> For the sea's worth."
>
> *Act I., Scene 2.*

I ask where was Shakspeare to observe such language as this? If he did observe it, it was with the inward eye of meditation upon his own nature: for the time, he became Othello, and spoke as Othello, in such circumstances, must have spoken.

Another remark I may make upon "Romeo and Juliet" is, that in this tragedy the poet is not, as I have hinted, entirely blended with the dramatist,—at least, not in the degree to be afterwards noticed in "Lear," "Hamlet," "Othello," or "Macbeth." Capulet and Montague not unfrequently talk a language only belonging to the poet, and not so characteristic of, and peculiar to, the passions of persons in the situations in which they are placed—a mistake, or rather an indistinctness, which many of our later dramatists have carried through the whole of their productions.

When I read the song of Deborah, I never think that she is a poet, although I think the song itself a sublime poem: it is as simple a dithyrambic production as exists in any language; but it is the proper and characteristic effusion of a woman highly elevated by triumph, by the natural hatred of oppressors, and resulting from a bitter sense of wrong: it is a song of exultation on deliverance from these evils, a deliverance accomplished by herself. When she exclaims, "The inhabitants of the villages ceased, they ceased in Israel, until that I, Deborah, arose, that I arose a mother in Israel," it is poetry in the highest sense: we have no reason, however, to suppose that if she had not been agitated by passion, and animated by victory, she would have been able so to express herself; or that if she had been placed in different circumstances, she would have used such language of truth and passion. We are to remember that Shakspeare, not placed under circumstances of excitement, and only wrought upon by his own vivid and vigorous imagination, writes a language that invariably, and intuitively becomes the condition and position of each character.

On the other hand, there is a language not descriptive

of passion, nor uttered under the influence of it, which is at the same time poetic, and shows a high and active fancy, as when Capulet says to Paris,—

> " Such comfort as do lusty young men feel,
> When well-apparell'd April on the heel
> Of limping winter treads, even such delight
> Among fresh female buds, shall you this night
> Inherit at my house."
>
> *Act I., Scene 2.*

Here the poet may be said to speak, rather than the dramatist; and it would be easy to adduce other passages from this play, where Shakspeare, for a moment forgetting the character, utters his own words in his own person.

In my mind, what have often been censured as Shakspeare's conceits are completely justifiable, as belonging to the state, age, or feeling of the individual. Sometimes, when they cannot be vindicated on these grounds, they may well be excused by the taste of his own and of the preceding age; as for instance, in Romeo's speech,

> " Here's much to do with hate, but more with love :—
> Why then, O brawling love! O loving hate!
> O anything, of nothing first created!
> O heavy lightness! serious vanity!
> Misshapen chaos of well-seeming forms!
> Feather of lead, bright smoke, cold fire, sick health!
> Still-waking sleep, that is not what it is!"
>
> *Act I., Scene 1.*

I dare not pronounce such passages as these to be absolutely unnatural, not merely because I consider the author a much better judge than I can be, but because I can understand and allow for an effort of the mind, when it would describe what it cannot satisfy itself with the description of, to reconcile opposites and qualify contradictions, leaving a middle state of mind more strictly appropriate to the imagination than any other, when it is, as it were, hovering between images. As soon as it is fixed on one image, it becomes understanding; but while it is unfixed and wavering between them, attaching itself permanently to none, it is imagination. Such is the fine description of Death in Milton :—

> " The other shape,
> If shape it might be call'd, that shape had none
> Distinguishable in member, joint, or limb,
> Or substance might be call'd, that shadow seem'd,

> For each seem'd either: black it stood as night;
> Fierce as ten furies, terrible as hell,
> And shook a dreadful dart: what seem'd his head
> The likeness of a kingly crown had on."
>
> *Paradise Lost*, Book II.

The grandest efforts of poetry are where the imagination is called forth, not to produce a distinct form, but a strong working of the mind, still offering what is still repelled, and again creating what is again rejected; the result being what the poet wishes to impress, namely, the substitution of a sublime feeling of the unimaginable for a mere image. I have sometimes thought that the passage just read might be quoted as exhibiting the narrow limit of painting, as compared with the boundless power of poetry: painting cannot go beyond a certain point; poetry rejects all control, all confinement. Yet we know that sundry painters have attempted pictures of the meeting between Satan and Death at the gates of Hell; and how was Death represented? Not as Milton has described him, but by the most defined thing that can be imagined—a skeleton, the dryest and hardest image that it is possible to discover; which, instead of keeping the mind in a state of activity, reduces it to the merest passivity,—an image, compared with which a square, a triangle, or any other mathematical figure, is a luxuriant fancy.

It is a general but mistaken notion that, because some forms of writing, and some combinations of thought, are not usual, they are not natural; but we are to recollect that the dramatist represents his characters in every situation of life and in every state of mind, and there is no form of language that may not be introduced with effect by a great and judicious poet, and yet be most strictly according to nature. Take punning, for instance, which may be the lowest, but at all events is the most harmless, kind of wit, because it never excites envy. A pun may be a necessary consequence of association: one man, attempting to prove something that was resisted by another, might, when agitated by strong feeling, employ a term used by his adversary with a directly contrary meaning to that for which that adversary had resorted to it: it might come into his mind as one way, and sometimes the best, of replying to that adversary. This form of speech is generally produced by a mixture of anger and contempt, and punning is a natural mode of expressing them.

It is my intention to pass over none of the important so-called conceits of Shakspeare, not a few of which are introduced into his later productions with great propriety and effect. We are not to forget, that at the time he lived there was an attempt at, and an affectation of, quaintness and adornment, which emanated from the Court, and against which satire was directed by Shakspeare in the character of Osrick in Hamlet. Among the schoolmen of that age, and earlier, nothing was more common than the use of conceits: it began with the revival of letters, and the bias thus given was very generally felt and acknowledged.

I have in my possession a dictionary of phrases, in which the epithets applied to love, hate, jealousy, and such abstract terms, are arranged; and they consist almost entirely of words taken from Seneca and his imitators, or from the schoolmen, showing perpetual antithesis, and describing the passions by the conjunction and combination of things absolutely irreconcileable. In treating the matter thus, I am aware that I am only palliating the practice in Shakspeare: he ought to have had nothing to do with merely temporary peculiarities: he wrote not for his own only, but for all ages, and so far I admit the use of some of his conceits to be a defect. They detract sometimes from his universality as to time, person, and situation.

If we were able to discover, and to point out the peculiar faults, as well as the peculiar beauties of Shakspeare, it would materially assist us in deciding what authority ought to be attached to certain portions of what are generally called his works. If we met with a play, or certain scenes of a play, in which we could trace neither his defects nor his excellences, we should have the strongest reason for believing that he had had no hand in it. In the case of scenes so circumstanced we might come to the conclusion that they were taken from the older plays, which, in some instances, he reformed or altered, or that they were inserted afterwards by some under-hand, in order to please the mob. If a drama by Shakspeare turned out to be too heavy for popular audiences, the clown might be called in to lighten the representation; and if it appeared that what was added was not in Shakspeare's manner, the conclusion would be inevitable, that it was not from Shakspeare's pen.

It remains for me to speak of the hero and heroine, of Romeo and Juliet themselves; and I shall do so with unaffected diffidence, not merely on account of the delicacy, but of the great importance of the subject. I feel that it is impossible to defend Shakspeare from the most cruel of all charges,—that he is an immoral writer—without entering fully into his mode of pourtraying female characters, and of displaying the passion of love. It seems to me, that he has done both with greater perfection than any other writer of the known world, perhaps with the single exception of Milton in his delineation of Eve.

When I have heard it said, or seen it stated, that Shakspeare wrote for man, but the gentle Fletcher for woman, it has always given me something like acute pain, because to me it seems to do the greatest injustice to Shakspeare: when, too, I remember how much character is formed by what we read, I cannot look upon it as a light question, to be passed over as a mere amusement, like a game of cards or chess. I never have been able to tame down my mind to think poetry a sport, or an occupation for idle hours.

Perhaps there is no more sure criterion of refinement in moral character, of the purity of intellectual intention, and of the deep conviction and perfect sense of what our own nature really is in all its combinations, than the different definitions different men would give of love. I will not detain you by stating the various known definitions, some of which it may be better not to repeat: I will rather give you one of my own, which, I apprehend, is equally free from the extravagance of pretended Platonism (which, like other things which super-moralise, is sure to demoralise) and from its grosser opposite.

Considering myself and my fellow-men as a sort of link between heaven and earth, being composed of body and soul, with power to reason and to will, and with that perpetual aspiration which tells us that this is ours for a while, but it is not ourselves; considering man, I say, in this two-fold character, yet united in one person, I conceive that there can be no correct definition of love which does not correspond with our being, and with that subordination of one part to another which constitutes our perfection. I would say therefore that—

"Love is a desire of the whole being to be united to some thing, or some being, felt necessary to its complete-

ness, by the most perfect means that nature permits, and reason dictates."

It is inevitable to every noble mind, whether man or woman, to feel itself, of itself, imperfect and insufficient, not as an animal only, but as a moral being. How wonderfully, then, has Providence contrived for us, by making that which is necessary to us a step in our exaltation to a higher and nobler state! The Creator has ordained that one should possess qualities which the other has not, and the union of both is the most complete ideal of human character. In everything the blending of the similar with the dissimilar is the secret of all pure delight. Who shall dare to stand alone, and vaunt himself, in himself, sufficient? In poetry it is the blending of passion with order that constitutes perfection: this is still more the case in morals, and more than all in the exclusive attachment of the sexes.

True it is, that the world and its business may be carried on without marriage; but it is so evident that Providence intended man (the only animal of all climates, and whose reason is pre-eminent over instinct) to be the master of the world, that marriage, or the knitting together of society by the tenderest, yet firmest ties, seems ordained to render him capable of maintaining his superiority over the brute creation. Man alone has been privileged to clothe himself, and to do all things so as to make him, as it were, a secondary creator of himself, and of his own happiness or misery: in this, as in all, the image of the Deity is impressed upon him.

Providence, then, has not left us to prudence only; for the power of calculation, which prudence implies, cannot have existed, but in a state which pre-supposes marriage. If God has done this, shall we suppose that he has given us no moral sense, no yearning, which is something more than animal, to secure that, without which man might form a herd, but could not be a society? The very idea seems to breathe absurdity.

From this union arise the paternal, filial, brotherly and sisterly relations of life; and every state is but a family magnified. All the operations of mind, in short, all that distinguishes us from brutes, originate in the more perfect state of domestic life.—One infallible criterion in forming an opinion of a man is the reverence in which he holds

women. Plato has said, that in this way we rise from sensuality to affection, from affection to love, and from love to the pure intellectual delight by which we become worthy to conceive that infinite in ourselves, without which it is impossible for man to believe in a God. In a word, the grandest and most delightful of all promises has been expressed to us by this practical state—our marriage with the Redeemer of mankind.

I might safely appeal to every man who hears me, who in youth has been accustomed to abandon himself to his animal passions, whether when he first really fell in love, the earliest symptom was not a complete change in his manners, a contempt and a hatred of himself for having excused his conduct by asserting, that he acted according to the dictates of nature, that his vices were the inevitable consequences of youth, and that his passions at that period of life could not be conquered? The surest friend of chastity is love: it leads us, not to sink the mind in the body, but to draw up the body to the mind—the immortal part of our nature. See how contrasted in this respect are some portions of the works of writers, whom I need not name, with other portions of the same works: the ebullitions of comic humour have at times, by a lamentable confusion, been made the means of debasing our nature, while at other times, even in the same volume, we are happy to notice the utmost purity, such as the purity of love, which above all other qualities renders us most pure and lovely.

Love is not, like hunger, a mere selfish appetite: it is an associative quality. The hungry savage is nothing but an animal, thinking only of the satisfaction of his stomach: what is the first effect of love, but to associate the feeling with every object in nature? the trees whisper, the roses exhale their perfumes, the nightingales sing, nay the very skies smile in unison with the feeling of true and pure love. It gives to every object in nature a power of the heart, without which it would indeed be spiritless.

Shakspeare has described this passion in various states and stages, beginning, as was most natural, with love in the young. Does he open his play by making Romeo and Juliet in love at first sight—at the first glimpse, as any ordinary thinker would do? Certainly not: he knew what he was about, and how he was to accomplish what

he was about: he was to develope the whole passion, and he commences with the first elements—that sense of imperfection, that yearning to combine itself with something lovely. Romeo became enamoured of the idea he had formed in his own mind, and then, as it were, christened the first real being of the contrary sex as endowed with the perfections he desired. He appears to be in love with Rosaline; but, in truth, he is in love only with his own idea. He felt that necessity of being beloved which no noble mind can be without. Then our poet, our poet who so well knew human nature, introduces Romeo to Juliet, and makes it not only a violent, but a permanent love—a point for which Shakspeare has been ridiculed by the ignorant and unthinking. Romeo is first represented in a state most susceptible of love, and then, seeing Juliet, he took and retained the infection.

This brings me to observe upon a characteristic of Shakspeare, which belongs to a man of profound thought and high genius. It has been too much the custom, when anything that happened in his dramas could not easily be explained by the few words the poet has employed, to pass it idly over, and to say that it is beyond our reach, and beyond the power of philosophy—a sort of terra incognita for discoverers—a great ocean to be hereafter explored. Others have treated such passages as hints and glimpses of something now non-existent, as the sacred fragments of an ancient and ruined temple, all the portions of which are beautiful, although their particular relation to each other is unknown. Shakspeare knew the human mind, and its most minute and intimate workings, and he never introduces a word, or a thought, in vain or out of place: if we do not understand him, it is our own fault or the fault of copyists and typographers; but study, and the possession of some small stock of the knowledge by which he worked, will enable us often to detect and explain his meaning. He never wrote at random, or hit upon points of character and conduct by chance; and the smallest fragment of his mind not unfrequently gives a clue to a most perfect, regular, and consistent whole.

As I may not have another opportunity, the introduction of Friar Laurence into this tragedy enables me to remark upon the different manner in which Shakspeare

has treated the priestly character, as compared with other writers. In Beaumont and Fletcher priests are represented as a vulgar mockery; and, as in others of their dramatic personages, the errors of a few are mistaken for the demeanour of the many: but in Shakspeare they always carry with them our love and respect. He made no injurious abstracts: he took no copies from the worst parts of our nature; and, like the rest, his characters of priests are truly drawn from the general body.

It may strike some as singular, that throughout all his productions he has never introduced the passion of avarice. The truth is, that it belongs only to particular parts of our nature, and is prevalent only in particular states of society; hence it could not, and cannot, be permanent. The Miser of Moliere and Plautus is now looked upon as a species of madman, and avarice as a species of madness. Elwes, of whom everybody has heard, was an individual influenced by an insane condition of mind; but, as a passion, avarice has disappeared. How admirably, then, did Shakspeare foresee, that if he drew such a character it could not be permanent! he drew characters which would always be natural, and therefore permanent, inasmuch as they were not dependent upon accidental circumstances.

There is not one of the plays of Shakspeare that is built upon anything but the best and surest foundation; the characters must be permanent—permanent while men continue men,—because they stand upon what is absolutely necessary to our existence. This cannot be said even of some of the most famous authors of antiquity. Take the capital tragedies of Orestes, or of the husband of Jocasta: great as was the genius of the writers, these dramas have an obvious fault, and the fault lies at the very root of the action. In Œdipus a man is represented oppressed by fate for a crime of which he was not morally guilty; and while we read we are obliged to say to ourselves, that in those days they considered actions without reference to the real guilt of the persons.

There is no character in Shakspeare in which envy is pourtrayed, with one solitary exception—Cassius, in "Julius Cæsar"; yet even there the vice is not hateful, inasmuch as it is counterbalanced by a number of excellent qualities and virtues. The poet leads the reader to suppose that it is rather something constitutional, something

derived from his parents, something that he cannot avoid, and not something that he has himself acquired; thus throwing the blame from the will of man to some inevitable circumstance, and leading us to suppose that it is hardly to be looked upon as one of those passions that actually debase the mind.

Whenever love is described as of a serious nature, and much more when it is to lead to a tragical result, it depends upon a law of the mind, which, I believe, I shall hereafter be able to make intelligible, and which would not only justify Shakspeare, but show an analogy to all his other characters.

END OF THE SEVENTH LECTURE.

THE EIGHTH LECTURE.

IT is impossible to pay a higher compliment to poetry, than to consider the effects it produces in common with religion, yet distinct (as far as distinction can be, where there is no division) in those qualities which religion exercises and diffuses over all mankind, as far as they are subject to its influence.

I have often thought that religion (speaking of it only as it accords with poetry, without reference to its more serious impressions) is the poetry of mankind, both having for their objects :—

1. To generalise our notions; to prevent men from confining their attention solely, or chiefly, to their own narrow sphere of action, and to their own individual circumstances. By placing them in certain awful relations it merges the individual man in the whole species, and makes it impossible for any one man to think of his future lot, or indeed of his present condition, without at the same time comprising in his view his fellow-creatures.

2. That both poetry and religion throw the object of deepest interest to a distance from us, and thereby not only aid our imagination, but in a most important manner subserve the interest of our virtues; for that man is indeed a slave, who is a slave to his own senses, and whose mind and imagination cannot carry him beyond the distance which his hand can touch, or even his eye can reach.

3. The grandest point of resemblance between them is, that both have for their object (I hardly know whether the English language supplies an appropriate word) the perfecting, and the pointing out to us the indefinite improvement of our nature, and fixing our attention upon that. They bid us, while we are sitting in the dark at our little fire, look at the mountain-tops, struggling with darkness, and announcing that light which shall be common to all, in which individual interests shall resolve into one common good, and every man shall find in his fellow man more than a brother.

Such being the case, we need not wonder that it has pleased Providence, that the divine truths of religion should have been revealed to us in the form of poetry; and that at all times poets, not the slaves of any particular sectarian opinions, should have joined to support all those delicate sentiments of the heart (often when they were most opposed to the reigning philosophy of the day) which may be called the feeding streams of religion.

I have heard it said that an undevout astronomer is mad. In the strict sense of the word, every being capable of understanding must be mad, who remains, as it were, fixed in the ground on which he treads—who, gifted with the divine faculties of indefinite hope and fear, born with them, yet settles his faith upon that, in which neither hope nor fear has any proper field for display. Much more truly, however, might it be said that, an undevout poet is mad: in the strict sense of the word, an undevout poet is an impossibility. I have heard of verse-makers (poets they are not, and never can be) who introduced into their works such questions as these:—Whether the world was made of atoms?—Whether there is a universe?—Whether there is a governing mind that supports it? As I have said, verse-makers are not poets: the poet is one who carries the simplicity of childhood into the powers of manhood; who, with a soul unsubdued by habit, unshackled by custom, contemplates all things with the freshness and the wonder of a child; and, connecting with it the inquisitive powers of riper years, adds, as far as he can find knowledge, admiration; and, where knowledge no longer permits admiration, gladly sinks back again into the childlike feeling of devout wonder.

The poet is not only the man made to solve the riddle

of the universe, but he is also the man who feels where it is not solved. What is old and worn-out, not in itself, but from the dimness of the intellectual eye, produced by worldly passions and pursuits, he makes new: he pours upon it the dew that glistens, and blows round it the breeze that cooled us in our infancy. I hope, therefore, that if in this single lecture I make some demand on the attention of my hearers to a most important subject, upon which depends all sense of the worthiness or unworthiness of our nature, I shall obtain their pardon. If I afford them less amusement, I trust that their own reflections upon a few thoughts will be found to repay them.

I have been led to these observations by the tragedy of "Romeo and Juliet," and by some, perhaps, indiscreet expressions, certainly not well chosen, concerning falling in love at first sight. I have taken one of Shakspeare's earliest works, as I consider it, in order to show that he, of all his contemporaries (Sir Philip Sidney alone excepted), entertained a just conception of the female character. Unquestionably, that gentleman of Europe—that all-accomplished man, and our beloved Shakspeare, were the only writers of that age, who pitched their ideas of female perfection according to the best researches of philosophy: compared with all who followed them, they stand as mighty mountains, the islands of a deluge, which has swallowed all the rest in the flood of oblivion.[1]

I certainly do not mean, as a general maxim, to justify so foolish a thing as what goes by the name of love at first sight; but, to express myself more accurately, I should say that there is, and has always existed, a deep emotion of the mind, which might be called love momentaneous—not love at first sight, nor known by the subject of it to be or to have been such, but after many years of experience.[2]

I have to defend the existence of love, as a passion in

[1] I remember, in conversing on this very point at a subsequent period,—I cannot fix the date,—Coleridge made a willing exception in favour of Spenser; but he added that the notions of the author of the "Faery Queen" were often so romantic and heightened by fancy, that he could not look upon Spenser's females as creatures of our world; whereas the ladies of Shakspeare and Sidney were flesh and blood, with their very defects and qualifications giving evidence of their humanity: hence the lively interest taken regarding them.—J. P. C.

[2] Coleridge here made a reference to, and cited a passage from, Hooker's "Ecclesiastical Polity;" but my note contains only a hint regarding it; and the probability is, that I did not insert more of it, because I thought I should be able, at some future time, to procure the exact words, or a reference to them, from the Lecturer. Whether I did so or not I cannot remember, but I find no trace of anything of the kind.—J. P. C.

itself fit and appropriate to human nature;—I say fit for human nature, and not only so, but peculiar to it, unshared either in degree or kind by any of our fellow creatures: it is a passion which it is impossible for any creature to feel, but a being endowed with reason, with the moral sense, and with the strong yearnings, which, like all other powerful effects in nature, prophesy some future effect.

If I were to address myself to the materialist, with reference to the human kind, and (admitting the three great laws common to all beings,—1, the law of self-preservation; 2, that of continuing the race; and 3, the care of the offspring till protection is no longer needed),—were to ask him, whether he thought any motives of prudence or duty enforced the simple necessity of preserving the race? or whether, after a course of serious reflection, he came to the conclusion, that it would be better to have a posterity, from a sense of duty impelling us to seek that as our object? —if, I say, I were to ask a materialist, whether such was the real cause of the preservation of the species, he would laugh me to scorn; he would say that nature was too wise to trust any of her great designs to the mere cold calculations of fallible mortality.

Then the question comes to a short crisis:—Is, or is not, our moral nature a part of the end of Providence? or are we, or are we not, beings meant for society? Is that society, or is it not, meant to be progressive? I trust that none of my auditors would endure the putting of the question—Whether, independently of the progression of the race, every individual has it not in his power to be indefinitely progressive?—for, without marriage, without exclusive attachment, there could be no human society; herds, as I said, there might be, but society there could not be: there could be none of that delightful intercourse between father and child; none of the sacred affections; none of the charities of humanity; none of all those many and complex causes, which have raised us to the state we have already reached, could possibly have existence. All these effects are not found among the brutes; neither are they found among savages, whom strange accidents have sunk below the class of human beings, insomuch that a stop seems actually to have been put to their progressiveness.

We may, therefore, safely conclude that there is placed within us some element, if I may so say, of our nature—

something which is as peculiar to our moral nature, as any other part can be conceived to be, name it what you will,—name it, I will say for illustration, devotion,—name it friendship, or a sense of duty; but something there is, peculiar to our nature, which answers the moral end; as we find everywhere in the ends of the moral world, that there are proportionate material and bodily means of accomplishing them.

We are born; and it is our nature and lot to be composed of body and mind; but when our heart leaps up on hearing of the victories of our country, or of the rescue of the virtuous, but unhappy, from the hands of an oppressor; when a parent is transported at the restoration of a beloved child from deadly sickness; when the pulse is quickened, from any of these or other causes, do we therefore say, because the body interprets the emotions of the mind and sympathises with them, asserting its claim to participation, that joy is not mental, or that it is not moral? Do we assert, that it was owing merely to fulness of blood that the heart throbbed, and the pulse played? Do we not rather say, that the regent, the mind, being glad, its slave, its willing slave, the body, responded to it, and obeyed the impulse? If we are possessed with a feeling of having done a wrong, or of having had a wrong done to us, and it excites the blush of shame or the glow of anger, do we pretend to say that, by some accident, the blood suffused itself into veins unusually small, and therefore that the guilty seemed to evince shame, or the injured indignation? In these things we scorn such instruction; and shall it be deemed a sufficient excuse for the materialist to degrade that passion, on which not only many of our virtues depend, but upon which the whole frame, the whole structure of human society rests? Shall we pardon him this debasement of love, because our body has been united to mind by Providence, in order, not to reduce the high to the level of the low, but to elevate the low to the level of the high? We should be guilty of nothing less than an act of moral suicide, if we consented to degrade that which on every account is most noble, by merging it in what is most derogatory: as if an angel were to hold out to us the welcoming hand of brotherhood, and we turned away from it, to wallow, as it were, with the hog in the mire.

One of the most lofty and intellectual of the poets

of the time of Shakspeare has described this degradation most wonderfully, where he speaks of a man, who, having been converted by the witchery of worldly pleasure and passion, into a hog, on being restored to his human shape still preferred his bestial condition :—

" But one, above the rest in special,
That had a hog been late, hight Grill by name,
Repined greatly, and did him miscall,
That from a hoggish form him brought to natural.

" Said Guyon, See the mind of beastly man!
That hath so soon forgot the excellence
Of his creation, when he life began,
That now he chooseth, with vile difference,
To be a beast and lack intelligence.
To whom the Palmer thus :—The dunghill kind
Delights in filth and foul incontinence :
Let Grill be Grill, and have his hoggish mind ;
But let us hence depart, whilst weather serves and wind."
Fairy Queen, Book II., c. 12.

The first feeling that would strike a reflecting mind, wishing to see mankind not only in an amiable but in a just light, would be that beautiful feeling in the moral world, the brotherly and sisterly affections,—the existence of strong affection greatly modified by the difference of sex ; made more tender, more graceful, more soothing and conciliatory by the circumstance of difference, yet still remaining perfectly pure, perfectly spiritual. How glorious, we may say, would be the effect, if the instances were rare ; but how much more glorious, when they are so frequent as to be only not universal. This species of affection is the object of religious veneration with all those who love their fellow men, or who know themselves.

The power of education over the human mind is herein exemplified, and data for hope are afforded of yet unrealised excellences, perhaps dormant in our nature. When we see so divine a moral effect spread through all classes, what may we not hope of other excellences, of unknown quality, still to be developed ?

By dividing the sisterly and fraternal affections from the conjugal, we have, in truth, two loves, each of them as strong as any affection can be, or ought to be, consistently with the performance of our duty, and the love we should bear to our neighbour. Then, by the former preceding

the latter, the latter is rendered more pure, more even, and more constant: the wife has already learned the discipline of pure love in the character of a sister. By the discipline of private life she has already learned how to yield, how to influence, how to command. To all this are to be added the beautiful gradations of attachment which distinguish human nature;—from sister to wife, from wife to child, to uncle, to cousin, to one of our kin, to one of our blood, to our near neighbour, to our countryman, and to our countryman.

The bad results of a want of this variety of orders, of this graceful subordination in the character of attachment, I have often observed in Italy in particular, as well as in other countries, where the young are kept secluded, not only from their neighbours, but from their own families—all closely imprisoned, until the hour when they are necessarily let out of their cages, without having had the opportunity of learning to fly—without experience, restrained by no kindly feeling, and detesting the control which so long kept them from enjoying the full hubbub of licence.

The question is, How have nature and Providence secured these blessings to us? In this way:—that in general the affections become those which urge us to leave the paternal nest. We arrive at a definite time of life, and feel passions that invite us to enter into the world; and this new feeling assuredly coalesces with a new object. Suppose we are under the influence of a vivid feeling that is new to us: that feeling will more firmly combine with an external object, which is likewise vivid from novelty, than with one that is familiar.

To this may be added the aversion, which seems to have acted very strongly in rude ages, concerning anything common to us and to the animal creation. That which is done by beasts man feels a natural repugnance to imitate. The desire to extend the bond of relationship, in families which had emigrated from the patriarchal seed, would likewise have its influence.

All these circumstances would render the marriage of brother and sister unfrequent, and in simple ages an ominous feeling to the contrary might easily prevail. Some tradition might aid the objections to such a union; and, for aught we know, some law might be preserved

in the Temple of Isis, and from thence obtained by the patriarchs, which would augment the horror attached to such connexions. This horror once felt, and soon propagated, the present state of feeling on the subject can easily be explained.

Children begin as early to talk of marriage as of death, from attending a wedding, or following a funeral: a new young visitor is introduced into the family, and from association they soon think of the conjugal bond. If a boy tell his parent that he wishes to marry his sister, he is instantly checked by a stern look, and he is shewn the impossibility of such a union. The controlling glance of the parental eye is often more effectual, than any form of words that could be employed; and in mature years a mere look often prevails where exhortation would have failed. As to infants, they are told, without any reason assigned, that it could not be so; and perhaps the best security for moral rectitude arises from a supposed necessity. Ignorant persons recoil from the thought of doing anything that has not been done, and because they have always been informed that it must not be done.

The individual has by this time learned the greatest and best lesson of the human mind—that in ourselves we are imperfect; and another truth, of the next, if not of equal, importance—that there exists a possibility of uniting two beings, each identified in their nature, but distinguished in their separate qualities, so that each should retain what distinguishes them, and at the same time each acquire the qualities of that being which is contradistinguished. This is perhaps the most beautiful part of our nature: the man loses not his manly character: he does not become less brave or less resolved to go through fire and water, if necessary, for the object of his affections: rather say, that he becomes far more brave and resolute. He then feels the beginnings of his moral nature: he then is sensible of its imperfection, and of its perfectibility. All the grand and sublime thoughts of an improved state of being then dawn upon him: he can acquire the patience of woman, which in him is fortitude: the beauty and susceptibility of the female character in him becomes a desire to display all that is noble and dignified. In short, the only true resemblance to a couple thus united is the

pure sky blue of heaven: the female unites the beautiful with the sublime, and the male the sublime with the beautiful.

Throughout the whole of his plays Shakspeare has evidently looked at the subject of love in this dignified light: he has conceived it not only with moral grandeur, but with philosophical penetration. The mind of man searches for something which shall add to his perfection —which shall assist him; and he also yearns to lend his aid in completing the moral nature of another. Thoughts like these will occupy many of his serious moments: imagination will accumulate on imagination, until at last some object attracts his attention, and to this object the whole weight and impulse of his feelings will be directed.

Who shall say this is not love? Here is system, but it is founded upon nature: here are associations; here are strong feelings, natural to us as men, and they are directed and finally attached to one object: —who shall say this is not love? Assuredly not the being who is the subject of these sensations.—If it be not love, it is only known that it is not by Him who knows all things. Shakspeare has therefore described Romeo as in love in the first instance with Rosaline, and so completely does he fancy himself in love that he declares, before he has seen Juliet,

> "When the devout religion of mine eye
> Maintains such falsehood, then turn tears to fires;
> And these, who, often drown'd, could never die,
> Transparent heretics, be burnt for liars.
> One fairer than my love? the all-seeing sun
> Ne'er saw her match since first the world begun."
>
> *Act I., Scene* 1.

This is in answer to Benvolio, who has asked Romeo to compare the supposed beauty of Rosaline with the actual beauty of other ladies; and in this full feeling of confidence Romeo is brought to Capulet's, as it were by accident: he sees Juliet, instantly becomes the heretic he has just before declared impossible, and then commences that completeness of attachment which forms the whole subject of the tragedy.

Surely Shakspeare, the poet, the philosopher, who combined truth with beauty and beauty with truth, never dreamed that he could interest his auditory in favour

of Romeo, by representing him as a mere weather-cock, blown round by every woman's breath; who, having seen one, became the victim of melancholy, eating his own heart, concentrating all his hopes and fears in her, and yet, in an instant, changing, and falling madly in love with another. Shakspeare must have meant something more than this, for this was the way to make people despise, instead of admiring his hero. Romeo tells us what was Shakspeare's purpose: he shows us that he had looked at Rosaline with a different feeling from that with which he had looked at Juliet. Rosaline was the object to which his over-full heart had attached itself in the first instance: our imperfect nature, in proportion as our ideas are vivid, seeks after something in which those ideas may be realised.

So with the indiscreet friendships sometimes formed by men of genius: they are conscious of their own weakness, and are ready to believe others stronger than themselves, when, in truth, they are weaker: they have formed an ideal in their own minds, and they want to see it realised; they require more than shadowy thought. Their own sense of imperfection makes it impossible for them to fasten their attachment upon themselves, and hence the humility of men of true genius: in, perhaps, the first man they meet, they only see what is good; they have no sense of his deficiencies, and their friendship becomes so strong, that they almost fall down and worship one in every respect greatly their inferior.

What is true of friendship is true of love, with a person of ardent feelings and warm imagination. What took place in the mind of Romeo was merely natural; it is accordant with every day's experience. Amid such various events, such shifting scenes, such changing personages, we are often mistaken, and discover that he or she was not what we hoped and expected; we find that the individual first chosen will not complete our imperfection; we may have suffered unnecessary pangs, and have indulged idly-directed hopes, and then a being may arise before us, who has more resemblance to the ideal we have formed. We know that we loved the earlier object with ardour and purity, but it was not what we feel for the later object. Our own mind tells us, that in the first instance we merely yearned after an object, but in the last instance we know

that we have found that object, and that it corresponds with the idea we had previously formed.

[Here my original notes abruptly break off: the brochure in which I had inserted them was full, and I took another for the conclusion of the Lecture, which is unfortunately lost.]

THE NINTH LECTURE.

It is a known but unexplained phenomenon, that among the ancients statuary rose to such a degree of perfection, as almost to baffle the hope of imitating it, and to render the chance of excelling it absolutely impossible; yet painting, at the same period, notwithstanding the admiration bestowed upon it by Pliny and others, has been proved to be an art of much later growth, as it was also of far inferior quality. I remember a man of high rank, equally admirable for his talents and his taste, pointing to a common sign-post, and saying that had Titian never lived, the richness of representation by colour, even there, would never have been attained. In that mechanical branch of painting, perspective, it has been shown that the Romans were very deficient. The excavations and consequent discoveries, at Herculaneum and elsewhere, prove the Roman artists to have been guilty of such blunders, as to give plausibility to the assertions of those who maintain that the ancients were wholly ignorant of perspective. However, that they knew something of it is established by Vitruvius in the introduction to his second book.

Something of the same kind, as I endeavoured to explain in a previous lecture, was the cause with the drama of the ancients, which has been imitated by the French, Italians, and by various writers in England since the Restoration. All that is there represented seems to be, as it were, upon one flat surface: the theme,[1] if we may so call it in reference to music, admits of nothing more than the change of a single note, and excludes that which is the true principle of life—the attaining of the same result by an infinite variety of means.

The plays of Shakspeare are in no respect imitations

[1] Here occurs another evident mistake of mine, in my original short-hand note, in consequence of mishearing: I hastily wrote *scheme*, instead of "theme," which last must have been the word of the Lecturer.

of the Greeks: they may be called analogies, because by very different means they arrive at the same end; whereas the French and Italian tragedies I have read, and the English ones on the same model, are mere copies, though they cannot be called likenesses, seeking the same effect by adopting the same means, but under most inappropriate and adverse circumstances.

I have thus been led to consider, that the ancient drama (meaning the works of Æschylus, Euripides, and Sophocles, for the rhetorical productions of the same class by the Romans are scarcely to be treated as original theatrical poems) might be contrasted with the Shakspearean drama. —I call it the Shakspearean drama to distinguish it, because I know of no other writer who has realised the same idea, although I am told by some, that the Spanish poets, Lopez de Vega and Calderon, have been equally successful. The Shakspearean drama and the Greek drama may be compared to statuary and painting. In statuary, as in the Greek drama, the characters must be few, because the very essence of statuary is a high degree of abstraction, which prevents a great many figures being combined in the same effect. In a grand group of Niobe, or in any other ancient heroic subject, how disgusting even it would appear, if an old nurse were introduced. Not only the number of figures must be circumscribed, but nothing undignified must be placed in company with what is dignified: no one personage must be brought in that is not an abstraction: all the actors in the scene must not be presented at once to the eye; and the effect of multitude, if required, must be produced without the intermingling of anything discordant.

Compare this small group with a picture by Raphael or Titian, in which an immense number of figures may be introduced, a beggar, a cripple, a dog, or a cat; and by a less degree of labour, and a less degree of abstraction, an effect is produced equally harmonious to the mind, more true to nature with its varied colours, and, in all respects but one, superior to statuary. The man of taste feels satisfied, and to that which the reason conceives possible, a momentary reality is given by the aid of imagination.

I need not here repeat what I have said before, regarding the circumstances which permitted Shakspeare to make an alteration, not merely so suitable to the age in which he

lived, but, in fact, so necessitated by the condition of that age. I need not again remind you of the difference I pointed out between imitation and likeness, in reference to the attempt to give reality to representations on the stage. The distinction between imitation and likeness depends upon the admixture of circumstances of dissimilarity; an imitation is not a copy, precisely as likeness is not sameness, in that sense of the word "likeness" which implies difference conjoined with sameness. Shakspeare reflected manners in his plays, not by a cold formal copy, but by an imitation; that is to say, by an admixture of circumstances, not absolutely true in themselves, but true to the character and to the time represented.

It is fair to own that he had many advantages. The great of that day, instead of surrounding themselves by the *chevaux de frise* of what is now called high breeding, endeavoured to distinguish themselves by attainments, by energy of thought, and consequent powers of mind. The stage, indeed, had nothing but curtains for its scenes, but this fact compelled the actor, as well as the author, to appeal to the imaginations, and not to the senses of the audience: thus was obtained a power over space and time, which in an ancient theatre would have been absurd, because it would have been contradictory. The advantage is vastly in favour of our own early stage: the dramatic poet there relies upon the imagination, upon the reason, and upon the noblest powers of the human heart; he shakes off the iron bondage of space and time; he appeals to that which we most wish to be, when we are most worthy of being, while the ancient dramatist binds us down to the meanest part of our nature, and the chief compensation is a simple acquiescence of the mind in the position, that what is represented might possibly have occurred in the time and place required by the unities. It is a poor compliment to a poet to tell him, that he has only the qualifications of a historian.

In dramatic composition the observation of the unities of time and place so narrows the period of action, so impoverishes the sources of pleasure, that of all the Athenian dramas there is scarcely one in which the absurdity is not glaring, of aiming at an object, and utterly failing in the attainment of it; events are sometimes brought into a space in which it is impossible for them to

have occurred, and in this way the grandest effort of the dramatist, that of making his play the mirror of life, is entirely defeated.

The limit allowed by the rules of the Greek stage was twenty-four hours; but, inasmuch as, even in this case, time must have become a subject of imagination, it was just as reasonable to allow twenty-four months, or even years. The mind is acted upon by such strong stimulants, that the period is indifferent; and when once the boundary of possibility is passed, no restriction can be assigned. In reading Shakspeare, we should first consider in which of his plays he means to appeal to the reason, and in which to the imagination, faculties which have no relation to time and place, excepting as in the one case they imply a succession of cause and effect, and in the other form a harmonious picture, so that the impulse given by the reason is carried on by the imagination.

We have often heard Shakspeare spoken of as a child of nature, and some of his modern imitators, without the genius to copy nature, by resorting to real incidents, and treating them in a certain way, have produced that stage-phenomenon which is neither tragic nor comic, nor tragi-comic, nor comi-tragic, but sentimental. This sort of writing depends upon some very affecting circumstances, and in its greatest excellence aspires no higher than the genius of an onion,—the power of drawing tears; while the author, acting the part of a ventriloquist, distributes his own insipidity among the characters, if characters they can be called, which have no marked and distinguishing features. I have seen dramas of this sort, some translated and some the growth of our own soil, so well acted, and so ill written, that if I could have been made for the time artificially deaf, I should have been pleased with that performance as a pantomime, which was intolerable as a play.

Shakspeare's characters, from Othello and Macbeth down to Dogberry and the Grave-digger, may be termed ideal realities. They are not the things themselves, so much as abstracts of the things, which a great mind takes into itself, and there naturalises them to its own conception. Take Dogberry: are no important truths there conveyed, no admirable lessons taught, and no valuable allusions made to reigning follies, which the poet saw must for ever

reign? He is not the creature of the day, to disappear with the day, but the representative and abstract of truth which must ever be true, and of humour which must ever be humorous.

The readers of Shakspeare may be divided into two classes:—

1. Those who read his works with feeling and understanding;

2. Those who, without affecting to criticise, merely feel, and may be said to be the recipients of the poet's power.

Between the two no medium can be endured. The ordinary reader, who does not pretend to bring his understanding to bear upon the subject, often feels that some real trait of his own has been caught, that some nerve has been touched; and he knows that it has been touched by the vibration he experiences—a thrill, which tells us that, by becoming better acquainted with the poet, we have become better acquainted with ourselves.

In the plays of Shakspeare every man sees himself, without knowing that he does so: as in some of the phenomena of nature, in the mist of the mountain the traveller beholds his own figure, but the glory round the head distinguishes it from a mere vulgar copy. In traversing the Brocken, in the north of Germany, at sunrise, the brilliant beams are shot askance, and you see before you a being of gigantic proportions, and of such elevated dignity, that you only know it to be yourself by similarity of action. In the same way, near Messina, natural forms, at determined distances, are represented on an invisible mist, not as they really exist, but dressed in all the prismatic colours of the imagination. So in Shakspeare: every form is true, everything has reality for its foundation; we can all recognise the truth, but we see it decorated with such hues of beauty, and magnified to such proportions of grandeur, that, while we know the figure, we know also how much it has been refined and exalted by the poet.

It is humiliating to reflect that, as it were, because heaven has given us the greatest poet, it has inflicted upon that poet the most incompetent critics: none of them seem to understand even his language, much less the principles upon which he wrote, and the peculiarities which distinguish him from all rivals. I will not now dwell upon

this point, because it is my intention to devote a lecture more immediately to the prefaces of Pope and Johnson. Some of Shakspeare's contemporaries appear to have understood him, and imitated him in a way that does the original no small honour; but modern preface-writers and commentators, while they praise him as a great genius, when they come to publish notes upon his plays, treat him like a schoolboy; as if this great genius did not understand himself, was not aware of his own powers, and wrote without design or purpose. Nearly all they can do is to express the most vulgar of all feelings, wonderment—wondering at what they term the irregularity of his genius, sometimes above all praise, and at other times, if they are to be trusted, below all contempt. They endeavour to reconcile the two opinions by asserting that he wrote for the mŏb; as if a man of real genius ever wrote for the mob. Shakspeare never consciously wrote what was below himself: careless he might be, and his better genius may not always have attended him; but I fearlessly say, that he never penned a line that he knew would degrade him. No man does anything equally well at all times; but because Shakspeare could not always be the greatest of poets, was he therefore to condescend to make himself the least? [1]

Yesterday afternoon a friend left a book for me by a German critic, of which I have only had time to read a small part; but what I did read I approved, and I should be disposed to applaud the work much more highly, were it not that in so doing I should, in a manner, applaud myself. The sentiments and opinions are coincident with those to which I gave utterance in my lectures at the Royal Institution. It is not a little wonderful, that so many ages have elapsed since the time of Shakspeare, and that it should remain for foreigners first to feel truly, and to appreciate justly, his mighty genius. The solution of this circumstance must be sought in the history of our nation: the English have become a busy commercial people, and they have unquestionably derived from this propensity many social and physical advantages: they have grown to be a mighty empire—one of the great

[1] It is certain that my shorthand note in this place affords another instance of mishearing it runs literally thus—"but because Shakspeare could not always be the greatest of poets, was he therefore to condescend to make himself a beast?" For "a beast," we must read *the least*, the antithesis being between "greatest" and "least," and not between "poet" and "beast." Yet 'beast" may be reconciled with sense as in *Macbeth*: "Notes and Emend." 420.

nations of the world, whose moral superiority enables it to struggle successfully against him, who may be deemed the evil genius of our planet.

On the other hand, the Germans, unable to distinguish themselves in action, have been driven to speculation: all their feelings have been forced back into the thinking and reasoning mind. To do, with them is impossible, but in determining what ought to be done, they perhaps exceed every people of the globe. Incapable of acting outwardly, they have acted internally: they first rationally recalled the ancient philosophy, and set their spirits to work with an energy of which England produces no parallel, since those truly heroic times, heroic in body and soul, the days of Elizabeth.

If all that has been written upon Shakspeare by Englishmen were burned, in the want of candles, merely to enable us to read one half of what our dramatist produced, we should be great gainers. Providence has given England the greatest man that ever put on and put off mortality, and has thrown a sop to the envy of other nations, by inflicting upon his native country the most incompetent critics. I say nothing here of the state in which his text has come down to us, farther than that it is evidently very imperfect: in many places his sense has been perverted, in others, if not entirely obscured, so blunderingly represented, as to afford us only a glimpse of what he meant, without the power of restoring his own expressions. But whether his dramas have been perfectly or imperfectly printed, it is quite clear that modern inquiry and speculative ingenuity in this kingdom have done nothing; or I might say, without a solecism, less than nothing (for some editors have multiplied corruptions) to retrieve the genuine language of the poet. His critics among us, during the whole of the last century, have neither understood nor appreciated him; for how could they appreciate what they could not understand?

His contemporaries, and those who immediately followed him, were not so insensible of his merits, or so incapable of explaining them; and one of them, who might be Milton when a young man of four and twenty, printed, in the second folio of Shakspeare's works, a laudatory poem, which, in its kind, has no equal for justness and distinctness of description, in reference to the powers and qualities

of lofty genius. It runs thus, and I hope that, when I have finished, I shall stand in need of no excuse for reading the whole of it.

" A mind reflecting ages past, whose clear
And equal surface can make things appear,
Distant a thousand years, and represent
Them in their lively colours, just extent
To outrun hasty time, retrieve the fates,
Roll back the heavens, blow ope the iron gates
Of death and Lethe, where confused lie
Great heaps of ruinous mortality:
In that deep dusky dungeon to discern
A royal ghost from churls; by art to learn
The physiognomy of shades, and give
Them sudden birth, wondering how oft they live;
What story coldly tells, what poets feign
At second hand, and picture without brain,
Senseless and soul-less shows: to give a stage
(Ample and true with life) voice, action, age,
As Plato's year, and new scene of the world,
Them unto us, or us to them had hurl'd:
To raise our ancient sovereigns from their herse,
Make kings his subjects; by exchanging verse,
Enlive their pale trunks; that the present age
Joys at their joy, and trembles at their rage:
Yet so to temper passion, that our ears
Take pleasure in their pain, and eyes in tears
Both weep and smile; fearful at plot so sad,
Then laughing at our fear; abus'd, and glad
To be abus'd; affected with that truth
Which we perceive is false, pleas'd in that ruth
At which we start, and, by elaborate play,
Tortur'd and tickl'd; by a crab-like way
Time past made pastime, and in ugly sort
Disgorging up his ravin for our sport:—
—While the plebeian imp, from lofty throne,
Creates and rules a world, and works upon
Mankind by secret engines; now to move
A chilling pity, then a rigorous love;
To strike up and stroke down, both joy and ire
To steer th' affections; and by heavenly fire
Mold us anew, stol'n from ourselves:—
This, and much more, which cannot be express'd
But by himself, his tongue, and his own breast,
Was Shakspeare's freehold; which his cunning brain
Improv'd by favour of the nine-fold train;
The buskin'd muse, the comick queen, the grand
And louder tone of Clio, nimble hand
And nimbler foot of the melodious pair,
The silver-voiced lady, the most fair
Calliope, whose speaking silence daunts,
And she whose praise the heavenly body chants;

These jointly woo'd him, envying one another;
(Obey'd by all as spouse, but lov'd as brother)
And wrought a curious robe, of sable grave,
Fresh green, and pleasant yellow, red most brave,
And constant blue, rich purple, guiltless white,
The lowly russet, and the scarlet bright;
Branch'd and embroider'd like the painted spring;
Each leaf match'd with a flower, and each string
Of golden wire, each line of silk: there run
Italian works, whose thread the sisters spun;
And these did sing, or seem to sing, the choice
Birds of a foreign note and various voice:
Here hangs a mossy rock; there plays a fair
But chiding fountain, purled: not the air,
Nor clouds, nor thunder, but were living drawn;
Not out of common tiffany or lawn,
But fine materials, which the Muses know,
And only know the countries where they grow.
Now, when they could no longer him enjoy,
In mortal garments pent,—death may destroy,
They say, his body; but his verse shall live,
And more than nature takes our hands shall give:
In a less volume, but more strongly bound,
Shakspeare shall breathe and speak; with laurel crown'd,
Which never fades; fed with ambrosian meat,
In a well-lined vesture, rich, and neat.
So with this robe they clothe him, bid him wear it;
For time shall never stain, nor envy tear it."

This poem is subscribed J. M. S., meaning, as some have explained the initials, "John Milton, Student": the internal evidence seems to me decisive, for there was, I think, no other man, of that particular day, capable of writing anything so characteristic of Shakspeare, so justly thought, and so happily expressed.

It is a mistake to say that any of Shakspeare's characters strike us as portraits: they have the union of reason perceiving, of judgment recording, and of imagination diffusing over all a magic glory. While the poet registers what is past, he projects the future in a wonderful degree, and makes us feel, however slightly, and see, however dimly, that state of being in which there is neither past nor future, but all is permanent in the very energy of nature.

Although I have affirmed that all Shakspeare's characters are ideal, and the result of his own meditation, yet a just separation may be made of those in which the ideal is most prominent—where it is put forward more intensely—where we are made more conscious of the

ideal, though in truth they possess no more nor less ideality: and of those which, though equally idealised, the delusion upon the mind is of their being real. The characters in the various plays may be separated into those where the real is disguised in the ideal, and those where the ideal is concealed from us by the real. The difference is made by the different powers of mind employed by the poet in the representation.

At present I shall only speak of dramas where the ideal is predominant; and chiefly for this reason—that those plays have been attacked with the greatest violence. The objections to them are not the growth of our own country, but of France,—the judgment of monkeys, by some wonderful phenomenon, put into the mouths of people shaped like men. These creatures have informed us that Shakspeare is a miraculous monster, in whom many heterogeneous components were thrown together, producing a discordant mass of genius—an irregular and ill-assorted structure of gigantic proportions.

Among the ideal plays, I will take "The Tempest," by way of example. Various others might be mentioned, but it is impossible to go through every drama, and what I remark on "The Tempest" will apply to all Shakspeare's productions of the same class.

In this play Shakspeare has especially appealed to the imagination, and he has constructed a plot well adapted to the purpose. According to his scheme, he did not appeal to any sensuous impression (the word "sensuous" is authorised by Milton) of time and place, but to the imagination, and it is to be borne in mind, that of old, and as regards mere scenery, his works may be said to have been recited rather than acted—that is to say, description and narration supplied the place of visual exhibition: the audience was told to fancy that they saw what they only heard described; the painting was not in colours, but in words.

This is particularly to be noted in the first scene—a storm and its confusion on board the king's ship. The highest and the lowest characters are brought together, and with what excellence! Much of the genius of Shakspeare is displayed in these happy combinations—the highest and the lowest, the gayest and the saddest; he is not droll in one scene and melancholy in another, but often

both the one and the other in the same scene. Laughter is made to swell the tear of sorrow, and to throw, as it were, a poetic light upon it, while the tear mingles tenderness with the laughter. Shakspeare has evinced the power, which above all other men he possessed, that of introducing the profoundest sentiments of wisdom, where they would be least expected, yet where they are most truly natural. One admirable secret of his art is, that separate speeches frequently do not appear to have been occasioned by those which preceded, and which are consequent upon each other, but to have arisen out of the peculiar character of the speaker.

Before I go further, I may take the opportunity of explaining what is meant by mechanic and organic regularity. In the former the copy must appear as if it had come out of the same mould with the original; in the latter there is a law which all the parts obey, conforming themselves to the outward symbols and manifestations of the essential principle. If we look to the growth of trees, for instance, we shall observe that trees of the same kind vary considerably, according to the circumstances of soil, air, or position; yet we are able to decide at once whether they are oaks, elms, or poplars.

So with Shakspeare's characters: he shows us the life and principle of each being with organic regularity. The Boatswain, in the first scene of "The Tempest," when the bonds of reverence are thrown off as a sense of danger impresses all, gives a loose to his feelings, and thus pours forth his vulgar mind to the old Counsellor:—

"Hence! What care these roarers for the name of King? To cabin: silence! trouble us not."

Gonzalo replies—"Good; yet remember whom thou hast aboard." To which the Boatswain answers—"None that I more love than myself. You are a counsellor: if you can command these elements to silence, and work the peace of the present, we will not hand a rope more; use your authority: if you cannot, give thanks that you have lived so long, and make yourself ready in your cabin for the mischance of the hour, if it so hap.—Cheerly, good hearts!—Out of our way, I say."

An ordinary dramatist would, after this speech, have represented Gonzalo as moralising, or saying something connected with the Boatswain's language; for ordinary

dramatists are not men of genius: they combine their ideas by association, or by logical affinity; but the vital writer, who makes men on the stage what they are in nature, in a moment transports himself into the very being of each personage, and, instead of cutting out artificial puppets, he brings before us the men themselves. Therefore, Gonzalo soliloquises,—"I have great comfort from this fellow: methinks, he hath no drowning mark upon him; his complexion is perfect gallows. Stand fast, good fate, to his hanging! make the rope of his destiny our cable, for our own doth little advantage. If he be not born to be hanged, our case is miserable."

In this part of the scene we see the true sailor with his contempt of danger, and the old counsellor with his high feeling, who, instead of condescending to notice the words just addressed to him, turns off, meditating with himself, and drawing some comfort to his own mind, by trifling with the ill expression of the boatswain's face, founding upon it a hope of safety.

Shakspeare had pre-determined to make the plot of this play such as to involve a certain number of low characters, and at the beginning he pitched the note of the whole. The first scene was meant as a lively commencement of the story; the reader is prepared for something that is to be developed, and in the next scene he brings forward Prospero and Miranda. How is this done? By giving to his favourite character, Miranda, a sentence which at once expresses the violence and fury of the storm, such as it might appear to a witness on the land, and at the same time displays the tenderness of her feelings—the exquisite feelings of a female brought up in a desert, but with all the advantages of education, all that could be communicated by a wise and affectionate father. She possesses all the delicacy of innocence, yet with all the powers of her mind unweakened by the combats of life. Miranda exclaims:—

> "O! I have suffered
> With those that I saw suffer: a brave vessel,
> Who had, no doubt, some noble creatures in her,
> Dash'd all to pieces."

The doubt here intimated could have occurred to no mind but to that of Miranda, who had been bred up in the

island with her father and a monster only: she did not know, as others do, what sort of creatures were in a ship; others never would have introduced it as a conjecture. This shows, that while Shakspeare is displaying his vast excellence, he never fails to insert some touch or other, which is not merely characteristic of the particular person, but combines two things—the person, and the circumstances acting upon the person. She proceeds:—

> "O! the cry did knock
> Against my very heart. Poor souls! they perish'd.
> Had I been any god of power, I would
> Have sunk the sea within the earth, or e'er
> It should the good ship so have swallow'd, and
> The fraughting souls within her."

She still dwells upon that which was most wanting to the completeness of her nature—these fellow creatures from whom she appeared banished, with only one relict to keep them alive, not in her memory, but in her imagination.

Another proof of excellent judgment in the poet, for I am now principally adverting to that point, is to be found in the preparation of the reader for what is to follow. Prospero is introduced, first in his magic robe, which, with the assistance of his daughter, he lays aside, and we then know him to be a being possessed of supernatural powers. He then instructs Miranda in the story of their arrival in the island, and this is conducted in such a manner, that the reader never conjectures the technical use the poet has made of the relation, by informing the auditor of what it is necessary for him to know.

The next step is the warning by Prospero, that he means, for particular purposes, to lull his daughter to sleep; and here he exhibits the earliest and mildest proof of magical power. In ordinary and vulgar plays we should have had some person brought upon the stage, whom nobody knows or cares anything about, to let the audience into the secret. Prospero having cast a sleep upon his daughter, by that sleep stops the narrative at the very moment when it was necessary to break it off, in order to excite curiosity, and yet to give the memory and understanding sufficient to carry on the progress of the history uninterruptedly.

Here I cannot help noticing a fine touch of Shakspeare's knowledge of human nature, and generally of the great

laws of the human mind: I mean Miranda's infant remembrance. Prospero asks her—

> "Canst thou remember
> A time before we came unto this cell?
> I do not think thou canst, for then thou wast not
> Out three years old.

Miranda answers,

> "Certainly, sir, I can."

Prospero inquires,

> "By what? by any other house or person?
> Of any thing the image tell me, that
> Hath kept with thy remembrance."

To which Miranda returns,

> "'Tis far off;
> And rather like a dream than an assurance
> That my remembrance warrants. Had I not
> Four or five women once, that tended me?"
>
> *Act I., Scene 2.*

This is exquisite! In general, our remembrances of early life arise from vivid colours, especially if we have seen them in motion: for instance, persons when grown up will remember a bright green door, seen when they were quite young; but Miranda, who was somewhat older, recollected four or five women who tended her. She might know men from her father, and her remembrance of the past might be worn out by the present object, but women she only knew by herself, by the contemplation of her own figure in the fountain, and she recalled to her mind what had been. It was not, that she had seen such and such grandees, or such and such peeresses, but she remembered to have seen something like the reflection of herself: it was not herself, and it brought back to her mind what she had seen most like herself.

In my opinion the picturesque power displayed by Shakspeare, of all the poets that ever lived, is only equalled, if equalled, by Milton and Dante. The presence of genius is not shown in elaborating a picture: we have had many specimens of this sort of work in modern poems, where all is so dutchified, if I may use the word, by the most minute touches, that the reader naturally asks why words, and not painting, are used? I know a young lady of much taste, who observed, that in reading recent versified accounts of

voyages and travels, she, by a sort of instinct, cast her eyes on the opposite page, for coloured prints of what was so patiently and punctually described.

The power of poetry is, by a single word perhaps, to instil that energy into the mind, which compels the imagination to produce the picture. Prospero tells Miranda,

> " One midnight,
> Fated to the purpose,[1] did Antonio open
> The gates of Milan ; and i' the dead of darkness,
> The ministers for the purpose hurried thence
> Me, and thy crying self."

Here, by introducing a single happy epithet, " crying," in the last line, a complete picture is presented to the mind, and in the production of such pictures the power of genius consists.

In reference to preparation, it will be observed that the storm, and all that precedes the tale, as well as the tale itself, serve to develope completely the main character of the drama, as well as the design of Prospero. The manner in which the heroine is charmed asleep fits us for what follows, goes beyond our ordinary belief, and gradually leads us to the appearance and disclosure of a being of the most fanciful and delicate texture, like Prospero, preternaturally gifted.

In this way the entrance of Ariel, if not absolutely forethought by the reader, was foreshewn by the writer: in addition, we may remark, that the moral feeling called forth by the sweet words of Miranda,

> " Alack, what trouble
> Was I then to you ! "

in which she considered only the sufferings and sorrows of her father, puts the reader in a frame of mind to exert his imagination in favour of an object so innocent and interesting. The poet makes him wish that, if supernatural agency were to be employed, it should be used for a being so young and lovely. " The wish is father to the thought," and

[1] Coleridge, of course, could only use the text of the day when he lectured; but, since that period, many plausible, and some indisputable, changes have been introduced into it: one of them occurs in reference to the word "purpose,' for which *practice* has been proposed as the true reading: the change is not absolutely necessary, but still we can entertain little doubt that "purpose" is a corruption, arising perhaps out of the similarity of the appearance of the words "purpose" and *practice* in hastily-written manuscript. The word "purpose" recurs in the very next line but one —J. P. C.

Ariel is introduced. Here, what is called poetic faith is required and created, and our common notions of philosophy give way before it: this feeling may be said to be much stronger than historic faith, since for the exercise of poetic faith the mind is previously prepared. I make this remark, though somewhat digressive, in order to lead to a future subject of these lectures—the poems of Milton. When adverting to those, I shall have to explain farther the distinction between the two.

Many Scriptural poems have been written with so much of Scripture in them, that what is not Scripture appears to be not true, and like mingling lies with the most sacred revelations. Now Milton, on the other hand, has taken for his subject that one point of Scripture of which we have the mere fact recorded, and upon this he has most judiciously constructed his whole fable. So of Shakspeare's "King Lear": we have little historic evidence to guide or confine us, and the few facts handed down to us, and admirably employed by the poet, are sufficient, while we read, to put an end to all doubt as to the credibility of the story. It is idle to say that this or that incident is improbable, because history, as far as it goes, tells us that the fact was so and so. Four or five lines in the Bible include the whole that is said of Milton's story, and the Poet has called up that poetic faith, that conviction of the mind, which is necessary to make that seem true, which otherwise might have been deemed almost fabulous.

But to return to "The Tempest," and to the wondrous creation of Ariel. If a doubt could ever be entertained whether Shakspeare was a great poet, acting upon laws arising out of his own nature, and not without law, as has sometimes been idly asserted, that doubt must be removed by the character of Ariel. The very first words uttered by this being introduce the spirit, not as an angel, above man; not a gnome, or a fiend, below man; but while the poet gives him the faculties and the advantages of reason, he divests him of all moral character, not positively, it is true, but negatively. In air he lives, from air he derives his being, in air he acts; and all his colours and properties seem to have been obtained from the rainbow and the skies. There is nothing about Ariel that cannot be conceived to exist either at sun-rise or at sun-set: hence all that belongs to Ariel belongs to the delight the mind

is capable of receiving from the most lovely external appearances. His answers to Prospero are directly to the question, and nothing beyond; or where he expatiates, which is not unfrequently, it is to himself and upon his own delights, or upon the unnatural situation in which he is placed, though under a kindly power and to good ends.

Shakspeare has properly made Ariel's very first speech characteristic of him. After he has described the manner in which he had raised the storm and produced its harmless consequences, we find that Ariel is discontented—that he has been freed, it is true, from a cruel confinement, but still that he is bound to obey Prospero, and to execute any commands imposed upon him. We feel that such a state of bondage is almost unnatural to him, yet we see that it is delightful for him to be so employed.—It is as if we were to command one of the winds in a different direction to that which nature dictates, or one of the waves, now rising and now sinking, to recede before it bursts upon the shore: such is the feeling we experience, when we learn that a being like Ariel is commanded to fulfil any mortal behest.

When, however, Shakspeare contrasts the treatment of Ariel by Prospero with that of Sycorax, we are sensible that the liberated spirit ought to be grateful, and Ariel does feel and acknowledge the obligation; he immediately assumes the airy being, with a mind so elastically correspondent, that when once a feeling has passed from it, not a trace is left behind.

Is there anything in nature from which Shakspeare caught the idea of this delicate and delightful being, with such child-like simplicity, yet with such preternatural powers? He is neither born of heaven, nor of earth; but, as it were, between both, live a May-blossom kept suspended in air by the fanning breeze, which prevents it from falling to the ground, and only finally, and by compulsion, touching earth. This reluctance of the Sylph to be under the command even of Prospero is kept up through the whole play, and in the exercise of his admirable judgment Shakspeare has availed himself of it, in order to give Ariel an interest in the event, looking forward to that moment when he was to gain his last and only reward—simple and eternal liberty.

Another instance of admirable judgment and excellent

preparation is to be found in the creature contrasted with Ariel—Caliban; who is described in such a manner by Prospero, as to lead us to expect the appearance of a foul, unnatural monster. He is not seen at once: his voice is heard; this is the preparation; he was too offensive to be seen first in all his deformity, and in nature we do not receive so much disgust from sound as from sight. After we have heard Caliban's voice he does not enter, until Ariel has entered like a water-nymph. All the strength of contrast is thus acquired without any of the shock of abruptness, or of that unpleasant sensation, which we experience when the object presented is in any way hateful to our vision.

The character of Caliban is wonderfully conceived: he is a sort of creature of the earth, as Ariel is a sort of creature of the air. He partakes of the qualities of the brute, but is distinguished from brutes in two ways:—by having mere understanding without moral reason; and by not possessing the instincts which pertain to absolute animals. Still, Caliban is in some respects a noble being: the poet has raised him far above contempt: he is a man in the sense of the imagination: all the images he uses are drawn from nature, and are highly poetical; they fit in with the images of Ariel. Caliban gives us images from the earth, Ariel images from the air. Caliban talks of the difficulty of finding fresh water, of the situation of morasses, and of other circumstances which even brute instinct, without reason, could comprehend. No mean figure is employed, no mean passion displayed, beyond animal passion, and repugnance to command.

The manner in which the lovers are introduced is equally wonderful, and it is the last point I shall now mention in reference to this, almost miraculous, drama. The same judgment is observable in every scene, still preparing, still inviting, and still gratifying, like a finished piece of music. I have omitted to notice one thing, and you must give me leave to advert to it before I proceed: I mean the conspiracy against the life of Alonzo. I want to shew you how well the poet prepares the feelings of the reader for this plot, which was to execute the most detestable of all crimes, and which, in another play, Shakspeare has called "the murder of sleep."

Antonio and Sebastian at first had no such intention:

it was suggested by the magical sleep cast on Alonzo and Gonzalo; but they are previously introduced scoffing and scorning at what was said by others, without regard to age or situation—without any sense of admiration for the excellent truths they heard delivered, but giving themselves up entirely to the malignant and unsocial feeling, which induced them to listen to everything that was said, not for the sake of profiting by the learning and experience of others, but of hearing something that might gratify vanity and self-love, by making them believe that the person speaking was inferior to themselves.

This, let me remark, is one of the grand characteristics of a villain; and it would not be so much a presentiment, as an anticipation of hell, for men to suppose that all mankind were as wicked as themselves, or might be so, if they were not too great fools. Pope, you are perhaps aware, objected to this conspiracy; but in my mind, if it could be omitted, the play would lose a charm which nothing could supply.

Many, indeed innumerable, beautiful passages might be quoted from this play, independently of the astonishing scheme of its construction. Every body will call to mind the grandeur of the language of Prospero in that divine speech, where he takes leave of his magic art; and were I to indulge myself by repetitions of the kind, I should descend from the character of a lecturer to that of a mere reciter. Before I terminate, I may particularly recall one short passage, which has fallen under the very severe, but inconsiderate, censure of Pope and Arbuthnot, who pronounce it a piece of the grossest bombast. Prospero thus addresses his daughter, directing her attention to Ferdinand:

> "The fringed curtains of thine eye advance,
> And say what thou seest yond."
>
> *Act I., Scene 2.*

Taking these words as a periphrase of—"Look what is coming yonder," it certainly may to some appear to border on the ridiculous, and to fall under the rule I formerly laid down,—that whatever, without injury, can be translated into a foreign language in simple terms, ought to be in simple terms in the original language; but it is to be borne in mind, that different modes of expression frequently arise

from difference of situation and education: a blackguard would use very different words, to express the same thing, to those a gentleman would employ, yet both would be natural and proper; difference of feeling gives rise to difference of language: a gentleman speaks in polished terms, with due regard to his own rank and position, while a blackguard, a person little better than half a brute, speaks like half a brute, showing no respect for himself, nor for others.

But I am content to try the lines I have just quoted by the introduction to them; and then, I think, you will admit, that nothing could be more fit and appropriate than such language. How does Prospero introduce them? He has just told Miranda a wonderful story, which deeply affected her, and filled her with surprise and astonishment, and for his own purposes he afterwards lulls her to sleep. When she awakes, Shakspeare has made her wholly inattentive to the present, but wrapped up in the past. An actress, who understands the character of Miranda, would have her eyes cast down, and her eyelids almost covering them, while she was, as it were, living in her dream. At this moment Prospero sees Ferdinand, and wishes to point him out to his daughter, not only with great, but with scenic solemnity, he standing before her, and before the spectator, in the dignified character of a great magician. Something was to appear to Miranda on the sudden, and as unexpectedly as if the hero of a drama were to be on the stage at the instant when the curtain is elevated. It is under such circumstances that Prospero says, in a tone calculated at once to arouse his daughter's attention,

> "The fringed curtains of thine eye advance,
> And say what thou seest yond."

Turning from the sight of Ferdinand to his thoughtful daughter, his attention was first struck by the downcast appearance of her eyes and eyelids; and, in my humble opinion, the solemnity of the phraseology assigned to Prospero is completely in character, recollecting his preternatural capacity, in which the most familiar objects in nature present themselves in a mysterious point of view. It is much easier to find fault with a writer by reference to former notions and experience, than to sit down and read him, recollecting his purpose, connecting one feeling with

another, and judging of his words and phrases, in proportion as they convey the sentiments of the persons represented.

Of Miranda we may say, that she possesses in herself all the ideal beauties that could be imagined by the greatest poet of any age or country; but it is not my purpose now, so much to point out the high poetic powers of Shakspeare, as to illustrate his exquisite judgment, and it is solely with this design that I have noticed a passage with which, it seems to me, some critics, and those among the best, have been unreasonably dissatisfied. If Shakspeare be the wonder of the ignorant, he is, and ought to be, much more the wonder of the learned: not only from profundity of thought, but from his astonishing and intuitive knowledge of what man must be at all times, and under all circumstances, he is rather to be looked upon as a prophet than as a poet. Yet, with all these unbounded powers, with all this might and majesty of genius, he makes us feel as if he were unconscious of himself, and of his high destiny, disguising the half god in the simplicity of a child.

END OF THE NINTH LECTURE.

THE TWELFTH LECTURE.

In the last lecture I endeavoured to point out in Shakspeare those characters in which pride of intellect, without moral feeling, is supposed to be the ruling impulse, such as Iago, Richard III., and even Falstaff. In Richard III., ambition is, as it were, the channel in which this impulse directs itself; the character is drawn with the greatest fulness and perfection; and the poet has not only given us that character, grown up and completed, but he has shown us its very source and generation. The inferiority of his person made the hero seek consolation and compensation in the superiority of his intellect; he thus endeavoured to counterbalance his deficiency. This striking feature is pourtrayed most admirably by Shakspeare, who represents Richard bringing forward his very defects and deformities as matters of boast. It was the same pride of intellect, or the assumption of it, that made John Wilkes vaunt that, although he was so ugly, he only wanted, with any lady,

ten minutes' start of the handsomest man in England. This certainly was a high compliment to himself; but a higher to the female sex, on the supposition that Wilkes possessed this superiority of intellect, and relied upon it for making a favourable impression, because ladies would know how to estimate his advantages.

I will now proceed to offer some remarks upon the tragedy of "Richard II.," on account of its not very apparent, but still intimate, connection with "Richard III." As, in the last, Shakspeare has painted a man where ambition is the channel in which the ruling impulse runs, so, in the first, he has given us a character, under the name of Bolingbroke, or Henry IV., where ambition itself, conjoined unquestionably with great talents, is the ruling impulse. In Richard III. the pride of intellect makes use of ambition as its means; in Bolingbroke the gratification of ambition is the end, and talents are the means.

One main object of these lectures is to point out the superiority of Shakspeare to other dramatists, and no superiority can be more striking, than that this wonderful poet could take two characters, which at first sight seem so much alike, and yet, when carefully and minutely examined, are so totally distinct.

The popularity of "Richard II." is owing, in a great measure, to the masterly delineation of the principal character; but were there no other ground for admiring it, it would deserve the highest applause, from the fact that it contains the most magnificent, and, at the same time, the truest eulogium of our native country that the English language can boast, or which can be produced from any other tongue, not excepting the proud claims of Greece and Rome. When I feel, that upon the morality of Britain depends the safety of Britain, and that her morality is supported and illustrated by our national feeling, I cannot read these grand lines without joy and triumph. Let it be remembered, that while this country is proudly pre-eminent in morals, her enemy has only maintained his station by superiority in mechanical appliances. Many of those who hear me will, no doubt, anticipate the passage I refer to, and it runs as follows:—

> "This royal throne of kings, this sceptred isle,
> This earth of majesty, this seat of Mars,
> This other Eden, demi-paradise;

This fortress, built by nature for herself
Against infection and the hand of war;
This happy breed of men, this little world,
This precious stone set in the silver sea,
Which serves it in the office of a wall,
Or as a moat defensive to a house,
Against the envy of less happier lands;
This blessed plot, this earth, this realm, this England,
This nurse, this teeming womb of royal kings,
Feared by their breed, and famous by their birth,
Renowned for their deeds as far from home,
For Christian service and true chivalry,
As is the Sepulchre in stubborn Jewry
Of the world's ransom, blessed Mary's son:
This land of such dear souls, this dear, dear land,
Dear for her reputation through the world,
Is now leas'd out, I die pronouncing it,
Like to a tenement, or pelting farm.
England, bound in with the triumphant sea,
Whose rocky shore beats back the envious siege
Of watery Neptune, is now bound in with shame,
With inky blots, and rotten parchment bonds."

Act II., Scene 1.

Every motive to patriotism, every cause producing it, is here collected, without one of those cold abstractions so frequently substituted by modern poets. If this passage were recited in a theatre with due energy and understanding, with a proper knowledge of the words, and a fit expression of their meaning, every man would retire from it secure in his country's freedom, if secure in his own constant virtue.

The principal personages in this tragedy are Richard II., Bolingbroke, and York. I will speak of the last first, although it is the least important; but the keeping of all is most admirable. York is a man of no strong powers of mind, but of earnest wishes to do right, contented in himself alone, if he have acted well: he points out to Richard the effects of his thoughtless extravagance, and the dangers by which he is encompassed, but having done so, he is satisfied; there is no after action on his part; he does nothing; he remains passive. When old Gaunt is dying, York takes care to give his own opinion to the King, and that done he retires, as it were, into himself.

It has been stated, from the first, that one of my purposes in these lectures is, to meet and refute popular objections to particular points in the works of our great dramatic poet; and I cannot help observing here upon the beauty,

and true force of nature, with which conceits, as they are called, and sometimes even puns, are introduced. What has been the reigning fault of an age must, at one time or another, have referred to something beautiful in the human mind; and, however conceits may have been misapplied, however they may have been disadvantageously multiplied, we should recollect that there never was an abuse of anything, but it previously has had its use. Gaunt, on his death-bed, sends for the young King, and Richard, entering, insolently and unfeelingly says to him:

> "What, comfort man! how is't with aged Gaunt?"
> *Act II., Scene* 1.

and Gaunt replies:

> "O, how that name befits my composition!
> Old Gaunt, indeed; and gaunt in being old:
> Within me grief hath kept a tedious fast,
> And who abstains from meat, that is not gaunt?
> For sleeping England long time have I watched;
> Watching breeds leanness, leanness is all gaunt:
> The pleasure that some fathers feed upon
> Is my strict fast, I mean my children's looks,
> And therein fasting, thou hast made me gaunt,
> Gaunt am I for the grave, gaunt as a grave,
> Whose hollow womb inherits nought but bones."

Richard inquires,

> "Can sick men play so nicely with their names?"

To which Gaunt answers, giving the true justification of conceits:

> "No; misery makes sport to mock itself:
> Since thou dost seek to kill my name in me,
> I mock my name, great king, to flatter thee."

He that knows the state of the human mind in deep passion must know, that it approaches to that condition of madness, which is not absolute frenzy or delirium, but which models all things to one reigning idea; still it strays from the main subject of complaint, and still it returns to it, by a sort of irresistible impulse. Abruptness of thought, under such circumstances, is true to nature, and no man was more sensible of it than Shakspeare. In a modern poem a mad mother thus complains:

> "The breeze I see is in yon tree:
> It comes to cool my babe and me."

This is an instance of the abruptness of thought, so natural to the excitement and agony of grief; and if it be admired in images, can we say that it is unnatural in words, which are, as it were, a part of our life, of our very existence? In the Scriptures themselves these plays upon words are to be found, as well as in the best works of the ancients, and in the most delightful parts of Shakspeare; and because this additional grace, not well understood, has in some instances been converted into a deformity—because it has been forced into places where it is evidently improper and unnatural, are we therefore to include the whole application of it in one general condemnation? When it seems objectionable, when it excites a feeling contrary to the situation, when it perhaps disgusts, it is our business to enquire whether the conceit has been rightly or wrongly used—whether it is in a right or in a wrong place?

In order to decide this point, it is obviously necessary to consider the state of mind, and the degree of passion, of the person using this play upon words. Resort to this grace may, in some cases, deserve censure, not because it is a play upon words, but because it is a play upon words in a wrong place, and at a wrong time. What is right in one state of mind is wrong in another, and much more depends upon that, than upon the conceit (so to call it) itself. I feel the importance of these remarks strongly, because the greater part of the abuse, I might say filth, thrown out and heaped upon Shakspeare, has originated in want of consideration. Dr. Johnson asserts that Shakspeare loses the world for a toy, and can no more withstand a pun, or a play upon words, than his Antony could resist Cleopatra. Certain it is, that Shakspeare gained more admiration in his day, and long afterwards, by the use of speech in this way, than modern writers have acquired by the abandonment of the practice: the latter, in adhering to, what they have been pleased to call, the rules of art, have sacrificed nature.

Having said thus much on the, often falsely supposed, blemishes of our poet—blemishes which are said to prevail in "Richard II" especially,—I will now advert to the character of the King. He is represented as a man not deficient in immediate courage, which displays itself at his assassination; or in powers of mind, as appears by the foresight he exhibits throughout the play; still, he is weak, variable, and womanish, and possesses feelings, which,

amiable in a female, are misplaced in a man, and altogether unfit for a king. In prosperity he is insolent and presumptuous, and in adversity, if we are to believe Dr. Johnson, he is humane and pious. I cannot admit the latter epithet, because I perceive the utmost consistency of character in Richard: what he was at first, he is at last, excepting as far as he yields to circumstances: what he shewed himself at the commencement of the play, he shews himself at the end of it. Dr. Johnson assigns to him rather the virtue of a confessor than that of a king.

True it is, that he may be said to be overwhelmed by the earliest misfortune that befalls him; but, so far from his feelings or disposition being changed or subdued, the very first glimpse of the returning sunshine of hope reanimates his spirits, and exalts him to as strange and unbecoming a degree of elevation, as he was before sunk in mental depression: the mention of those in his misfortunes, who had contributed to his downfall, but who had before been his nearest friends and favourites, calls forth from him expressions of the bitterest hatred and revenge. Thus, where Richard asks:

> "Where is the Earl of Wiltshire? Where is Bagot?
> What is become of Bushy? Where is Green?
> That they have let the dangerous enemy
> Measure our confines with such peaceful steps?
> If we prevail, their heads shall pay for it,
> I warrant they have made peace with Bolingbroke."
>
> *Act III., Scene 2.*

Scroop answers:

> "Peace have they made with him, indeed, my lord."

Upon which Richard, without hearing more, breaks out:

> "O villains! vipers, damn'd without redemption!
> Dogs, easily won to fawn on any man!
> Snakes, in my heart-blood warm'd, that sting my heart!
> Three Judases, each one thrice worse than Judas!
> Would they make peace? terrible hell make war
> Upon their spotted souls for this offence!"

Scroop observes upon this change, and tells the King how they had made their peace:

> "Sweet love, I see, changing his property
> Turns to the sourest and most deadly hate.
> Again uncurse their souls: their peace is made
> With heads and not with hands: those whom you curse

Have felt the worst of death's destroying wound,
And lie full low, grav'd in the hollow ground."

Richard receiving at first an equivocal answer,—" Peace have they made with him, indeed, my lord,"—takes it in the worst sense: his promptness to suspect those who had been his friends turns his love to hate, and calls forth the most tremendous execrations.

From the beginning to the end of the play he pours out all the peculiarities and powers of his mind: he catches at new hope, and seeks new friends, is disappointed, despairs, and at length makes a merit of his resignation. He scatters himself into a multitude of images, and in conclusion endeavours to shelter himself from that which is around him by a cloud of his own thoughts. Throughout his whole career may be noticed the most rapid transitions —from the highest insolence to the lowest humility—from hope to despair, from the extravagance of love to the agonies of resentment, and from pretended resignation to the bitterest reproaches. The whole is joined with the utmost richness and copiousness of thought, and were there an actor capable of representing Richard, the part would delight us more than any other of Shakspeare's masterpieces,—with, perhaps, the single exception of King Lear. I know of no character drawn by our great poet with such unequalled skill as that of Richard II.

Next we come to Henry Bolingbroke, the rival of Richard II. He appears as a man of dauntless courage, and of ambition equal to that of Richard III.; but, as I have stated, the difference between the two is most admirably conceived and preserved. In Richard III. all that surrounds him is only dear as it feeds his inward sense of superiority: he is no vulgar tyrant—no Nero or Caligula: he has always an end in view, and vast fertility of means to accomplish that end. On the other hand, in Bolingbroke we find a man who in the outset has been sorely injured: then, we see him encouraged by the grievances of his country, and by the strange mismanagement of the government, yet at the same time scarcely daring to look at his own views, or to acknowledge them as designs. He comes home under the pretence of claiming his dukedom, and he professes that to be his object almost to the last; but, at the last, he avows his purpose to its full extent, of which he was himself unconscious in the earlier stages.

This is proved by so many passages, that I will only select one of them; and I take it the rather, because out of the many octavo volumes of text and notes, the page on which it occurs is, I believe, the only one left naked by the commentators. It is where Bolingbroke approaches the castle in which the unfortunate king has taken shelter: York is in Bolingbroke's company—the same York who is still contented with speaking the truth, but doing nothing for the sake of the truth,—drawing back after he has spoken and becoming merely passive when he ought to display activity. Northumberland says,

> "The news is very fair and good, my lord:
> Richard not far from hence hath hid his head."
>
> *Act III., Scene* 3.

York rebukes him thus:

> "It would beseem the Lord Northumberland
> To say King Richard:—Alack, the heavy day,
> When such a sacred king should hide his head!"

Northumberland replies:

> "Your grace mistakes me: only to be brief
> Left I his title out."[1]

To which York rejoins:

> "The time hath been,
> Would you have been so brief with him, he would
> Have been so brief with you, to shorten you,
> For taking so the head, your whole head's length."

Bolingbroke observes,

> "Mistake not, uncle, farther than you should"

And York answers, with a play upon the words "take" and "mistake":

> "Take not, good cousin, farther than you should,
> Lest you mistake. The heavens are o'er our heads."

Here, give me leave to remark in passing, that the play upon words is perfectly natural, and quite in character: the answer is in unison with the tone of passion, and seems connected with some phrase then in popular use.[2] Bolingbroke tells York:

[1] So Coleridge read the passage, his ear requiring the insertion of *me*, which is one of the emendations in the corrected folio, 1632, discovered many years afterwards.—J. P. C.

[2] Nicholas Breton wrote a "Dialogue between the Taker and Mistaker," but the earliest known edition is dated 1603.—J. P. C

" I know it, uncle, and oppose not myself
Against their will."

Just afterwards, Bolingbroke thus addresses himself to Northumberland:

" Noble lord,
Go to the rude ribs of that ancient castle;
Through brazen trumpet send the breath of parle
Into his ruin'd ears, and thus deliver."

Here, in the phrase " into his ruin'd ears," I have no doubt that Shakspeare purposely used the personal pronoun, " his," to shew, that although Bolingbroke was only speaking of the castle, his thoughts dwelt on the king. In Milton the pronoun " her " is employed, in relation to " form," in a manner somewhat similar. Bolingbroke had an equivocation in his mind, and was thinking of the king, while speaking of the castle. He goes on to tell Northumberland what to say, beginning,

" Henry Bolingbroke,"

which is almost the only instance in which a name forms the whole line; Shakspeare meant it to convey Bolingbroke's opinion of his own importance:—

" Henry Bolingbroke
On both his knees doth kiss King Richard's hand,
And sends allegiance and true faith of heart
To his most royal person; hither come
Even at his feet to lay my arms and power,
Provided that, my banishment repealed,
And lands restor'd again, be freely granted.
If not, I'll use th' advantage of my power,
And lay the summer's dust with showers of blood,
Rain'd from the wounds of slaughter'd Englishmen."

At this point Bolingbroke seems to have been checked by the eye of York, and thus proceeds in consequence:

" The which, how far off from the mind of Bolingbroke
It is, such crimson tempest should bedrench
The fresh green lap of fair King Richard's land,
My stooping duty tenderly shall show."

He passes suddenly from insolence to humility, owing to the silent reproof he received from his uncle. This change of tone would not have taken place, had Bolingbroke been allowed to proceed according to the natural bent of his own mind, and the flow of the subject. Let me direct

attention to the subsequent lines, for the same reason; they are part of the same speech:

> "Let's march without the noise of threat'ning drum,
> That from the castle's tatter'd battlements
> Our fair appointments may be well perused.
> Methinks, King Richard and myself should meet
> With no less terror than the elements
> Of fire and water, when their thundering shock
> At meeting tears the cloudy cheeks of heaven."

Having proceeded thus far with the exaggeration of his own importance, York again checks him, and Bolingbroke adds, in a very different strain,

> "He be the fire, I'll be the yielding water:
> The rage be his, while on the earth I rain
> My waters; on the earth, and not on him."

I have thus adverted to the three great personages in this drama, Richard, Bolingbroke, and York; and of the whole play it may be asserted, that with the exception of some of the last scenes (though they have exquisite beauty) Shakspeare seems to have risen to the summit of excellence in the delineation and preservation of character.

We will now pass to "Hamlet," in order to obviate some of the general prejudices against the author, in reference to the character of the hero. Much has been objected to, which ought to have been praised, and many beauties of the highest kind have been neglected, because they are somewhat hidden.

The first question we should ask ourselves is—What did Shakspeare mean when he drew the character of Hamlet? He never wrote any thing without design, and what was his design when he sat down to produce this tragedy? My belief is, that he always regarded his story, before he began to write, much in the same light as a painter regards his canvas, before he begins to paint—as a mere vehicle for his thoughts—as the ground upon which he was to work. What then was the point to which Shakspeare directed himself in Hamlet? He intended to pourtray a person, in whose view the external world, and all its incidents and objects, were comparatively dim, and of no interest in themselves, and which began to interest only, when they were reflected in the mirror of his mind. Hamlet beheld external things in the same way that a man of vivid

imagination, who shuts his eyes, sees what has previously made an impression on his organs.

The poet places him in the most stimulating circumstances that a human being can be placed in. He is the heir apparent of a throne; his father dies suspiciously; his mother excludes her son from his throne by marrying his uncle. This is not enough; but the Ghost of the murdered father is introduced, to assure the son that he was put to death by his own brother. What is the effect upon the son?—instant action and pursuit of revenge? No: endless reasoning and hesitating—constant urging and solicitation of the mind to act, and as constant an escape from action; ceaseless reproaches of himself for sloth and negligence, while the whole energy of his resolution evaporates in these reproaches. This, too, not from cowardice, for he is drawn as one of the bravest of his time—not from want of forethought or slowness of apprehension, for he sees through the very souls of all who surround him, but merely from that aversion to action, which prevails among such as have a world in themselves.

How admirable, too, is the judgment of the poet! Hamlet's own disordered fancy has not conjured up the spirit of his father; it has been seen by others: he is prepared by them to witness its re-appearance, and when he does see it, Hamlet is not brought forward as having long brooded on the subject. The moment before the Ghost enters, Hamlet speaks of other matters: he mentions the coldness of the night, and observes that he has not heard the clock strike, adding, in reference to the custom of drinking, that it is

> "More honour'd in the breach than the observance."
>
> *Act I., Scene* 4.

Owing to the tranquil state of his mind, he indulges in some moral reflections. Afterwards, the Ghost suddenly enters.

> "*Hor.* Look, my lord! it comes.
> *Ham.* Angels and ministers of grace defend us!"

The same thing occurs in "Macbeth": in the dagger-scene, the moment before the hero sees it, he has his mind applied to some indifferent matters; "Go, tell thy mistress," etc. Thus, in both cases, the preternatural appearance has all the effect of abruptness, and the reader

is totally divested of the notion, that the figure is a vision of a highly wrought imagination.

Here Shakspeare adapts himself so admirably to the situation—in other words, so puts himself into it—that, though poetry, his language is the very language of nature. No terms, associated with such feelings, can occur to us so proper as those which he has employed, especially on the highest, the most august, and the most awful subjects that can interest a human being in this sentient world. That this is no mere fancy, I can undertake to establish from hundreds, I might say thousands, of passages. No character he has drawn, in the whole list of his plays, could so well and fitly express himself, as in the language Shakspeare has put into his mouth.

There is no indecision about Hamlet, as far as his own sense of duty is concerned; he knows well what he ought to do, and over and over again he makes up his mind to do it. The moment the players, and the two spies set upon him, have withdrawn, of whom he takes leave with a line so expressive of his contempt,

> "Ay so; good bye you.—Now I am alone,"

he breaks out into a delirium of rage against himself for neglecting to perform the solemn duty he had undertaken, and contrasts the factitious and artificial display of feeling by the player with his own apparent indifference;

> "What's Hecuba to him, or he to Hecuba,
> That he should weep for her?"

Yet the player did weep for her, and was in an agony of grief at her sufferings, while Hamlet is unable to rouse himself to action, in order that he may perform the command of his father, who had come from the grave to incite him to revenge:—

> "This is most brave!
> That I, the son of a dear father murder'd,
> Prompted to my revenge by heaven and hell,
> Must, like a whore, unpack my heart with words,
> And fall a cursing like a very drab,
> A scullion." *Act II., Scene* [illegible]

It is the same feeling, the same conviction of what is his duty, that makes Hamlet exclaim in a subsequent part of the tragedy:

" How all occasions do inform against me,
And spur my dull revenge! What is a man,
If his chief good, and market of his time,
Be but to sleep and feed? A beast, no more. * * *
——————————— I do not know
Why yet I live to say—'this thing's to do,'
Sith I have cause and will and strength and means
To do't." *Act IV., Scene 4.*

Yet with all this strong conviction of duty, and with all this resolution arising out of strong conviction, nothing is done. This admirable and consistent character, deeply acquainted with his own feelings, painting them with such wonderful power and accuracy, and firmly persuaded that a moment ought not to be lost in executing the solemn charge committed to him, still yields to the same retiring from reality, which is the result of having, what we express by the terms, a world within himself.

Such a mind as Hamlet's is near akin to madness. Dryden has somewhere said,

" Great wit to madness nearly is allied,"

and he was right; for he means by " wit " that greatness of genius, which led Hamlet to a perfect knowledge of his own character, which, with all strength of motive, was so weak as to be unable to carry into act his own most obvious duty.

With all this he has a sense of imperfectness, which becomes apparent when he is moralising on the skull in the churchyard. Something is wanting to his completeness—something is deficient which remains to be supplied, and he is therefore described as attached to Ophelia. His madness is assumed, when he finds that witnesses have been placed behind the arras to listen to what passes, and when the heroine has been thrown in his way as a decoy.

Another objection has been taken by Dr. Johnson, and Shakspeare has been taxed very severely. I refer to the scene where Hamlet enters and finds his uncle praying, and refuses to take his life, excepting when he is in the height of his iniquity. To assail him at such a moment of confession and repentance, Hamlet declares,

" Why, this is hire and salary, not revenge."
Act III., Scene 4

He therefore forbears, and postpones his uncle's death, until he can catch him in some act

" That has no relish of salvation in't."

This conduct, and this sentiment, Dr. Johnson has pronounced to be so atrocious and horrible, as to be unfit to be put into the mouth of a human being.[1] The fact, however, is that Dr. Johnson did not understand the character of Hamlet, and censured accordingly: the determination to allow the guilty King to escape at such a moment is only part of the indecision and irresoluteness of the hero. Hamlet seizes hold of a pretext for not acting, when he might have acted so instantly and effectually: therefore, he again defers the revenge he was bound to seek, and declares his determination to accomplish it at some time,

> " When he is drunk, asleep, or in his rage,
> Or in th' incestuous pleasures of his bed."

This, allow me to impress upon you most emphatically, was merely the excuse Hamlet made to himself for not taking advantage of this particular and favourable moment for doing justice upon his guilty uncle, at the urgent instance of the spirit of his father.

Dr. Johnson farther states, that in the voyage to England, Shakspeare merely follows the novel as he found it, as if the poet had no other reason for adhering to his original; but Shakspeare never followed a novel, because he found such and such an incident in it, but because he saw that the story, as he read it, contributed to enforce, or to explain some great truth inherent in human nature. He never could lack invention to alter or improve a popular narrative; but he did not wantonly vary from it, when he knew that, as it was related, it would so well apply to his own great purpose. He saw at once how consistent it was with the character of Hamlet, that after still resolving, and still deferring, still determining to execute, and still postponing execution, he should finally, in the infirmity of his disposition, give himself up to his destiny, and hopelessly place himself in the power, and at the mercy of his enemies.

Even after the scene with Osrick, we see Hamlet still indulging in reflection, and hardly thinking of the task he has just undertaken: he is all dispatch and resolution, as far as words and present intentions are concerned, but all hesitation and irresolution, when called upon to carry his

[1] See Malone's Shakspeare by Boswell, vii., 382, for Johnson's note upon this part of the scene.—J. P. C.

words and intentions into effect; so that, resolving to do everything, he does nothing. He is full of purpose, but void of that quality of mind which accomplishes purpose.

Anything finer than this conception, and working out of a great character, is merely impossible. Shakspeare wished to impress upon us the truth, that action is the chief end of existence—that no faculties of intellect, however brilliant, can be considered valuable, or indeed otherwise than as misfortunes, if they withdraw us from, or render us repugnant to action, and lead us to think and think of doing, until the time has elapsed when we can do anything effectually. In enforcing this moral truth, Shakspeare has shown the fulness and force of his powers: all that is amiable and excellent in nature is combined in Hamlet, with the exception of one quality. He is a man living in meditation, called upon to act by every motive human and divine, but the great object of his life is defeated by continually resolving to do, yet doing nothing but resolve.

END OF THE TWELFTH LECTURE.